

AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH SOCCER

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WEEKLY



We're top of the League for the B-I-G soccer stories

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BEST
OF
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WALES NEXT?



BY TOM
ANDERSON



Australia's most capped international, captain Paul Wade, keeps a close watch on Sweden's most capped striker, Johnny Ekstrom.

THE ASF will now pursue every avenue possible to have Wales tour here in June.

This follows the Socceroos unbeaten run in the three match series against Sweden when they won two games and drew the other.

The Welsh national side will be offered three full internationals against the Socceroos and two other games against state representative sides in a bid to entice them Down Under.

This was disclosed by ASF chairman John Constantine yesterday.

Constantine also disclosed he will fly to Asia in the coming weeks to have talks with Asian officials regarding a tour by the Socceroos.

This will be for a backup in case the proposed Socceroo tour of South or Central America falls through.

ALL THE LATEST ON THE WORLD SCENE

What ABSW says . . .

'TACTICAL TANTRUMS'

CONGRATULATIONS are due to national coach Eddie Thomson and his Soccerroos for their stunning win in the series against Sweden.

The results, which ever way you look at them, were excellent.

OK, the style adopted by the Soccerroos was not everybody's cup of tea, but coach Thomson is adamant this was an exercise with the World Cup qualifiers firmly in mind.

Without doubt the biggest talking point to emerge from this series were the tactics employed by both coaches.

At times, some of their methods left the fans in total confusion.

Soccerroo coach Thomson has adopted a playing system he is confident will pay dividends in the long run.

Swedish coach Tommy Svensson, on the other hand, was adamant he was in the "experimental stage" with the coming European Championships firmly in his mind.

The outcome for most of the time, was a lack of fluency from both teams in the series.

Also, from the long term viewpoint, it seems vital both outfits need games, and plenty of them, for their playing tactics to be brought to perfection.

From the simplistic point of view, tactics and strategy in football is all about planning.

It is to adopt a game plan which promotes the strengths in the lineup and disguises the weaknesses.

Finding a system of play which brings

out the best in your players.

And an important point which should never be forgotten is, that no system should be so rigidly enforced that it stifles the individual talents of the players.

Improvisation and invention has always been an important ingredient in successful football teams, and always will be, as long as the game is played.

The present Soccerroo playing tactics have to be planned and polished in training and in plenty of games if the desired success is to be achieved in the World Cup qualifiers.

It is to be hoped that the powers that be in the ASF fully realise this and act accordingly.

— THE EDITOR

Bright change in NSL format

BY ALISTAIR RUSSELL

THREE points for a win! That's the positive step the 14 NSL clubs voted in favour for season '92/'93, at the NSL Policy Review Committee Meeting last weekend.

With coaches and clubs too often settling for a point, NSL fans can smile at the prospect of a more attacking league, while this season's competition resumes this weekend

following the Scandinavian series.

It is down to serious business for all 14 clubs, with leaders Melbourne Croatia's visit to tough as teak Wollongong, and Apia's continued revival at Sydney Croatia, the feature of round 19.

Fourth placed Wollongong, unbeaten at home, have conceded just one goal in the league at Brandon Park this season, but their steely resolve at the back will be put to the test when the dangerous

us Damian Mori, Francis Awaritefe and Branko Milosevic come to town.

The league frontrunners have broken from the pack following a ten match unbeaten run, and although the visitors have been running hot away from home, winning four and drawing one of their last five, a draw looks likely with the Wolves so tough to beat at their headquarters.

Apia's belated charge must continue to roll on at Sydney Croatia

if they are to make a fist of their slim semi final chances.

The Bull's have transformed their season, no longer bogged down at the tail of the field, the Leichhardt club have won their last three scoring ten goals, more than they collected in the previous 15 matches.

The addition of Soccerroo Jason Van Blerk has sparked Apia into action and although Croatia have lost only once in their eight matches under new savior

ur Ivan Raznevic, the visitors, desperate to continue their drive, should squeeze home.

South Melbourne will again have their

hands full when they host unpredictable Marconi.

Both these attacking outfits will welcome the new points system

for next season, while looking just as far as this Sunday, an epic battle can always be expected from these two champions sides.

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TV United

BY GUY HAND

BRISBANE United make their first appearance on the SBS Match of the Day this week when they take on Sydney Olympic in Sydney on Sunday.

Coach Miron Bleiberg said his side were looking forward to their long-overdue televised appearance.

"It's about time," Bleiberg said.
"I think everybody has forgotten about Brisbane United this season."

"If you look at the other newcomers to the league this year, Newcastle and West Adelaide, they have been on match of the day a couple of times and they have not gone as well as we have this season."

"We are the new team that has been in form and we have been sitting in high mid-table all season."

But Bleiberg will give nothing away as to how his side will play in their first appearance on the box.

"Let's just wait and see what we decide to do," Bleiberg said.

No decision has been made on whether ace midfielder Danny Halligan will take the park for United against Olympic.

The Kiwi international is recovering from a back injury, which required him to have four weeks complete rest.

Bleiberg said he would make a decision on whether Halligan would go to Sydney later this week.

"If he's in shape I'll take him," Bleiberg said.

"But he hasn't trained with us for three weeks, so I want him to train with us this week before I will consider him."

"He's a very good player, but players who are injury-free have any priority over those players who are suffering from injury."

"I have spoken to him over the weekend and he says the situation is improving."

Melbourne victory ties up series for the Socceroos!

AUSTRALIA 1
SWEDEN 0

BY GREG BLAKE

Socceroo boss Eddie Thomson saved a broadside for the national press following his team's sensational series win over Sweden was confirmed with a barnstorming 1-0 victory in the third and final meeting of the two countries under lights at Olympic Park on Sunday night.

A glorious 65th minute header from skipper Paul Wade gave the Aussies the chance to celebrate a famous 2-0 series win over the Swedes.

It also gave 'Thommo' the chance to fire back at a press brigade which had slaughtered his 'one man up' system for the duration of the three games series.

When asked what he had learned during the games against the Euro '92 challengers, Thomson responded with a caustic: "Not to trust the press".

"I've never heard so many spectators talk about systems and one person up front in all my life," he told the press gallery.

"You're brainwashing these people."

Thomson will rightfully feel vindicated by his decision-making during the series, given the final result, a momentous one by Australian soccer standards.

But it wasn't until this third and final game that the rusty Aussies finally got it

right.

And even then it took some Thomson-inspired substitutions early in the second half to turn the game back in Australia's favour.

As the Socceroos well-won hold on the game began to flounder and the Swedes were beginning to pound relentlessly at the door, Thomson produced a three card trick which left Tommy Svensson's boys beaten and breathless.

Ned Zelic, who started his career as a mid-defender, came on for Mike Petersen and his class shone with neon brilliance.

On Zelic's flanks appeared Jason Van Blerk, on at the interval for Tony Vidmar, and Adelaide City's rolling ball of muscle, Ernie Tapai, who replaced a sluggish Tommy McCulloch.

Between the three of them, the new men on turned Thomson's seemingly ponderous offensive scheme into a lethal winner.

Of course, a little Paul Wade inspiration didn't hurt at all, and that is exactly what the Aussie skipper provided with a goal of extraordinary class some 65 minutes in.

Responding to Australia's up-tempo resurgence, Wade, who has threatened to return to the scoresheet throughout the series, produced a stunner.

As Zelic clipped a free kick to the near post the definitive Aussie battler charged headlong into the ruck of Swedish defenders and flew ala 'Aussie Rules' above the pack before connecting with a fearsome header which powered into the top corner of the net.

Wade conceded later that the move was unrehearsed.

"That was not the way it was supposed to happen", said a beaming Wade at the post mortem.

Frankly Wadey, it doesn't matter a toss.

Just to prove to Thommo that even the leopards in the press can change their spots, Australia deserved its win, fluke goal or not.

Even Swedish manager Tommy Svensson admitted as much, calling Australia a very good side and giving Thommo more ammunition by saying that the Aussie coach "was justified" in using the much-maligned system that was employed during the series.

But any system in the world is reliant on having the players able to carry it off, and on Sunday evening the Socceroos had plenty of contributors.

Of the defenders, none lowered their colours, with Robbie Zabica faultless, Mehmet Durakovic, who admitted he had a point to prove after getting dragged by Thomson in Sydney, tireless, Alex Tobin controlled and cool in the crisis and Milan Ivanovic ending as my man of the match.

Thomson, whose rather pointed post-match remarks about his "back three" made it clear that Ian Gray and Vidmar were not to be counted as defenders, would certainly have been pleased with Gray's resilience.

In an enthralling duel with Jan Jansson, Gray broke even when defending against the pacy Swedish number eleven, and gave the swarming Socceroos a fair sight going forward.

Typically, Wade was a key man, and whilst Paul Trimboli looked unsettled in his deeper-than-usual role, Alistair Edwards carried on from his Adelaide performance, which was full of lightening quick take-offs and unsettling aggression.

Svensson thought Australia's audacious snatch-and-grab raid was not reflective of the game overall.

"We felt a little unlucky about today's performance", he said after the game.

In some respects the eminently likeable Swedish team boss was correct.

Sweden gave plenty in this final match of the series, although too much was left to



too few, with the likes of Stefan Rehn running himself into the ground in a bid to avoid a galling second successive defeat against the upstart Aussies.

Johnny Roedlund was the Swede's most dangerous front man, giving Zabica a couple of headaches and forcing a goal-line clearance from Durakovic.

But Johnny Ekstrom provided the miss of the game with six minutes remaining on the clock as he managed to bounce a header over the crossbar of the open Aussie goal from less than three metres out.

Not an easy trick that one, but succinctly summed up by Svensson, who managed to produce one of the great insights into the game with this gem.

"When you don't score and the other team does, that's when you lose", the straight-faced Swedish manager explained.

I'm glad we've cleared that little mystery up.

AUSTRALIA: Zabica, Gray, Durakovic, Ivafovic, Tobin, Vidmar (Van Blerk HT), McCulloch (Tapai 60), Wade, Trimboli, Petersen (Zelic 54), Edwards.

SWEDEN: L. Eriksson, Nilsson, J. Eriksson, Erllingmark, Fursth, Rehn, Anderson (Burwall 81), Fjellstrom (Mild 68), Roedlund, Ekstrom, Jansson.

SCORERS: Wade 65m for Australia.

YELLOW CARDS: Fursth 64m for Sweden.

REFEREE: J. Fraser.

CROWD: 10,800.



Soccer League

ROUND 19

Friday February 7

Newcastle v P'matta Melita 7.45pm Austral Park

Sunday February 9

Sth Melbourne v Marconi 6pm Middle Park

Preston v West Adelaide 6pm Connor Reserve

Sydney Olympic v Brisbane Utd 7pm St George Stad

Wollongong v Melb Croatia 6pm Brandon Park

Adelaide City v Heidelberg Utd 8pm Hindmarsh Stad

Sydney Croatia v Apia Leichhardt 7pm Croatian Spts C

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Big Eddie has the last laugh

BY GREG BLAKE & CON STAVROS

IT was a justifiably proud Soccerroo supremo Eddie Thomson who faced the large media contingent at the post-match press conference following Australia's historic series win against Sweden at Olympic Park.

Deep within the bowels of Melbourne's soccer showpiece, Thomson along with Captain Paul Wade and counterparts Tommy Svensson, began the slow process of analysing the often maligned three match program.

Thomson took particular satisfaction in blasting the media for forcing the issue of the supposedly negative Australian formation into the undue prominence.

"Not to trust the media", was Thomson's reaction to the question of the most important lesson learnt from the matches.

"You're brainwashing these people (spectators)", he quipped to the attentive media throng, many of which was eating their words.

Suitably chastised, the press were then given the opportunity to hear his comments on the teams hard fought 1-0 victory. "My defence is rock solid, I'm delighted with the back three that played tonight and the back three that played in Sydney."

"I think that Edwards, Van Blerk and Trimboli have showed us that they are good enough to be in the squad," he continued.

Jason Van Blerk came in for considerable praise from Thomson when questioned on the youngsters ability. "Jason has only had three or four ga-

mes, much better players like the Dalglish's and Keegan's had maybe twelve or fourteen internationals before they started to play well. I'm going to stand by Van Blerk."

Tommy Svensson was perhaps surprisingly fairly upbeat about his charges performance throughout the series.

"It was a good tour, we had three very tough matches and we have tested some new players who have shown what they can and can't do."

"It is of course a big disappointment not having scored one single goal and not having won a match, but you must take into consideration that it is winter-time in Sweden now and that we don't have eight or nine of our very best players."

When asked about the number of players he expected to keep in the squad for the upcoming European Championships being hosted by the Swedes, Svensson remarked, "That's about the fifteenth time I've been asked that question. Perhaps three or four players will remain."

Just to prove that he can state the obvious just as well as our local champion of the soccer clinche, Ferenc "the ball is round" Puskas can, Svensson remarked in total frankness, "when you don't score and the other team does, that's when you lose". You sure got that one right Tommy!

Thomson's much criticised tactics also found an unlikely supporter in Svensson who remarked that "Eddie has all the right in the world to play the system that he does, because you can't expect Australia to dominate against very good opponents."

They must play very good defence and then hope for the best and create some chances, I think that is the best way to win."

Captain Paul Wade took time in the conference to vividly describe the all important match-winner that he headed home from a Ned Zelic free kick.

"We work hard at training on free kicks, but I can honestly say that was not how it was supposed to happen", Wade said.

"I took off for the near post and I was fortunate enough that it dropped right in front of me and I thought well I'll just try and hit the target from here and it came right off the corner and went into the back of the net."

Asked if it was the most pleasurable goal he'd scored, Captain Courageous could only find comparison with his strike against Argentina for "the sheer thrill of scoring against the World Champions."

"People say my head looks like a biscuit tin and last weekend's goal came right off the corner of that tin", a beaming Wade quipped.

For Australia's sake, we're glad to have you abroad Captain, biscuit tin and all.



Swedens Stefan Rehn in action.

The Olyroos keep on that winning trail

AUST. OLYMPIC 2
VICTORIA 1

BY CON STAVROS

THE Australian Olympic team continued its procession of favourable results against State sides, by defeating Victoria 2-1 at Melbourne's Olympic Park on Sunday.

Preceding the senior Australian squad's gutsy display against Sweden, the Olyroos looked cool, calm and collected in battling off a physical Victorian outfit.

Victorian coach Tim White had promised a local victory before the game, but he, like all others must tip his hat to what is without doubt a world class under 23 combination.

Defender Dominic Longo of the Newcastle Breakers was the hero for the Olympians with a rare double strike.

Steve Refenes' free-kick in the 20th minute found the head of an unmarked Longo who had wandered forward to power home a sweet-

ly timed move.

Kimion Taliadoros, rejected by Australian boss Eddie Thomson at the 11th hour, struck another blow for his inclusion in the Soccerroo squad with the equaliser for Victoria in the 33rd minute.

The CCSL's leading marksman finished a move with the outside of his right boot after Premier League player Goran Lozanovski had displayed some impressive lead up work.

The reply was the last touch for the super-sharp Taliadoros who had to leave the field just moments later with a minor groin strain.

Longo who was marking Taliadoros, whilst fellow defensive back Shaun Murphy blotted Frances Awaratife out of the contest, found substitute Andrew Zinni less of a handful and proceeded to make a number of dangerous forays throughout the remainder of the match.

His adventure was rewarded with the match-winner in the 53rd minute, albeit courtesy of a mix-up in the increasingly shabby Victorian defence.

Jeff Olver, racing to

clear a floating cross, managed to collide with central defender Paul Della Rocca who was equally intent on forcing a clearance. Their efforts only succeeded in presenting the ball to Longo on the edge of the box, whose left foot drive flashed into the back of the net.

George Slifkas and company for the Olyroos continued their domination of the midfield for the remainder of the encounter, which also saw the eventuation of four substitutes for each side.

Paul Souris, Greg Dickenson, John Gibson and Steve Corica all had runs in the green and gold and looked comfortable in holding on for what

was in the end a deserved victory.

For Victoria, who most likely have been the Olyroos stiffest State test to date, it was a creditable but potentially costly performance.

Aside from Taliadoros' injury, South Melbourne team-mate Peter Tsolakis looked shaken when substituted after a heavy collision and Preston defender Robert Stojcevski left the field with what appeared a bad leg injury.

The Olyroos now face a Tasmanian State side, before meeting a as yet unknown European opponent in April in the final obstacle on the road to Barcelona.

On recent performances, the Olyroos

without question are poised to bring Australian Soccer its finest international acclaim yet.

VICTORIA: Olver, Healy, Stojcevski (Spasevski 75m), Krajcic, Della Rocca, Bratten, Stubbins, Lozanovski (Silic 75m), Taliadoros (Zinni 38m), Awaratife, Tsolakis (Michalakopoulos 65m).

AUSTRALIAN OLYMPIC TEAM: Filan Mori (Souris 85m), Longo, Blagojevic, Murphy, Muscat, Hristodoulou (Dickinson 77m), Slifkas, Seal, Hasler (Gibson 60m), Refenes (Corica 66m).

SCORERS: Longo 20th and 53rd minutes for Australian Olympic Team, Taliadoros 33rd for Victoria.

YELLOW CARDS: Stubbins 15th minute for Victoria, Slifkas 16th minute for Australian Olympic Team.

REFEREE: John Santalabel.

CROWD: 10,800 (Part of double-header).

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Socceroos return to their winning ways!



Socceroo defender Tony Vidmar wins a tussle with Swedish opponent.

AUSTRALIA 1
SWEDEN 0

BY ALAN CLARK

WITH the passing of time, Wednesday night's Hindmarsh Stadium scoreline, Australia 1 Sweden 0, will survive as a cold, but cheering, soccer statistic.

Forgotten will be that for the poor paying customer in the crowd of 9301 it was yet another dreadfully devalued, woeful spectacle.

The Socceroos were outthought, outmanoeuvred and outwitted by a poor Swedish team that will be a shadow of that which competes in the European championships in June.

Edwards' goal and his aggressive posture saw him retained for Sunday's tour closer in Melbourne.

Thomson was delighted with the way the former Rangers and Johore striker took the game to the Swedes and ruffled a few Scandinavian feathers.

But at the other end, Adelaide City's man of the match Alex Tobin again showed he is an ice-cool standout.

"He is the cornerstone of the defence," Thomson said. "He does all the simple things and plays so easily. You hardly notice he is there but not much gets past him."

Of Tobin's club-mates, goalkeeper Robert Zabica did all that was required of him in a quiet evening. Tony Vidmar, in an unfamiliar left sided midfield

role, and out of touch, but poorly serviced, striker Steve Maxwell did not have matches to save for posterity.

Swedish chief Svensson admitted he never was happy in defeat but conceded he was pleased to have aired some new talent in a side that showed seven changes from that which earned a scoreless draw on Sunday in Sydney.

"We played better than in Sydney. Some of our younger players did quite well. The goal came about from an individual error not because of any confusion with us making the substitutions just before," he said.

"I was very pleased with our performance tactically. We played good football in the second-half and did not deserve to lose."

But winning is winning. That is the name of the game and Socceroo coach Eddie Thomson makes no bones about that.

"They flooded midfield; put a man on Zelic at the back and exposed flaws in our game. But we battled and fought against a good side.

"Tactically, they had us. But there have been games where we have had the advantage and have taken nothing from them. It all evens out.

"We had our work cut out to overcome Tommy's (coach Svensson) tactics. They were a better team on the night than us but it is my duty to get Australia a win. Sometimes it is not pretty to watch but you have to do these things."

■ SA holds its head high in a 1-2 loss to the Olympic Games side in the curtain-raiser. Shane Porter scored for SA with Games squad goals from Dominic Longo and Gary Hasler.

AUSTRALIA: Zabica, Blagojevic, Bernal (Durakovic 56m), Zelic, Tobin, Vidmar, McCulloch, Wade, Milosevic (Petersen 72m), Maxwell, Van Blerk (Edwards 69m). Subs not used: Bosnich, Gray, Stewart, Tapal, Spink, Ivanovic, Trimboli.

SWEDEN: Fedel, Eriksson, Bjorklund, Larsson, Andersson, Rehn, Mild (Burwall 77m), Erlingmark (Ekstrom 77m), Martinsson, Jansson. Subs not used: Eriksson, Nilsson, Fjellstrom, Furth, Kindvall.

SCORER: Edwards 77m for Australia.
YELLOW CARDS: None.

CROWD: 9301.
REFEREE: Tom McRoe (SA).

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A minute by minute description of the action

AUSTRALIA 1 SWEDEN 0



By Lou Gautier

AUSTRALIA scored an all too rare win over European opposition in a full "A" international when the Socceroos accounted for Sweden 1-0 at Hindmarsh Stadium last Wednesday.

Alistair Edwards' 77th minute strike brought up Australia's 455th goal in full internationals.

Here are minute-by-minute highlights of the second of the three-match series bet-

ween the Aussies and the Swedes.

FIRST HALF

Australia again win the loss and referee Tamm McRoe, in his first full international since becoming a FIFA referee, gets the match under way — Australia's 254th "A" international and Sweden's 681th, in front of 9,301 spectators.

• **3 min:** Tony Vidmar is forced to clear — with a forceful header — a freekick by Magnus Erlingmark some 25 metres from goal which was awarded for a foul by Andrew Bernal on Mikael Martinsson, the lone striker up front for the Swedes.

ded for a foul by Andrew Bernal on Mikael Martinsson, the lone striker up front for the Swedes.

• **4 min:** A neat throughball by George McCulloch on the right flank finds Milan Blagojevic, but a timely interception by Joakim Bjorklund clears the menace for the Swedes.

• **7 min:** A speculative shot from 15 metres by Patrick Andersson, one of the many new players brought in by coach Tommy Svensson, does not trouble Aussie keeper Robert Zabica.

• **10 min:** The first corner of the match. Unlike the Sydney international, this time it's in Sweden's favour. Vidmar's foolish back pass was quite beyond Zabica's reach. Jan Jansson takes the short corner. A deep ball is headed away by Paul Wade. Hakan Mild gets the ball back, but Ned Zelic intercepts and clears.

• **12 min:** Captain Peter Larsson's turn to concede a corner to deny Jason van Blerk after a foray down the left wing by Vidmar. Branko Milosevic's corner kick is easily saved by goalkeeper Jonnie Fedel in his international debut.

• **13 min:** Andersson is left unattended by Alex Tobin and Bernal at the conclusion of a piercing run

down the middle by Mild, but his 18-metre shot is well over the bar.

• **16 min:** Sweden's second strike on goal as Martinsson shoots hard and low and on target from 15 metres. Zabica, however, is again in position to save.

• **19 min:** van Blerk does extremely well to latch onto a loose ball near Sweden's right hand side corner flag and to get a perfectly executed cross over, but there are no Aussies following through in the box.

• **20 min:** van Blerk torments Jan Eriksson again and gains a freekick. Milosevic takes it, floats the ball to the left. Paul Wade, as always, had run up, but his header is just wide. This was Australia's first chance of the game.

• **25 min:** Zabica is forced to dive at Erlingmark's feet after a confused phase of play in the Socceroo defence which enabled the Swedes to carve it wide open.

• **29 min:** Blagojevic concedes a corner, taken by Stefan Rehn but Martinsson handles.

• **31 min:** A very impressive run down the left flank by Martinsson, whose centimetre-perfect cross finds the unmarked Erlingmark — again left unattended — but his powerful header is just over Zabica's crossbar.

• **34 min:** A Ned Zelic freekick from 35 metres is headed away by Eriksson, off the head of the lurking Steve Maxwell.

• **42 min:** The Socceroos are outnumbered on the right flank and Jansson is given ample room and time to shoot, but he kicks the ball over the bar in what was a clear chance for Sweden.

SECOND HALF

• **1 min:** A Vidmar throw-in results in a corner conceded by Mild. Milosevic takes it and the ball is headed away by Erlingmark for another corner, which this time is cleared upfield by Mats Gren.

• **4 min:** McCulloch blocks a freekick by Rehn for a foul by Zelic on Eriksson — after a good run down field by Martinsson.

• **5 min:** Andersson outpaces Wade and Tobin but skies his shot after a few se-



Aussie skipper Paul Wade in action against the Swedes.

conds of intense pressure again panic the Australian defence into jittery errors.

• **10 min:** Jansson's stinging 25-metre drive (a well-executed volley) is saved by the ever-alert and steady as a rock Zabica.

• **12 min:** Mehmet Durakovic comes in for the injured Bernal, forced out of the action with a bloodied nose.

• **13 min:** A positive Australian move — at last! — is capped by a splendid run and shot from Vidmar, but goalie Fedel saves.

• **17 min:** Gren to the rescue for the Swedes as he intercepts what looked like a highly threatening "1-2" between Wade and Blagojevic.

• **19 min:** A lovely piece of work by Sweden, switching from left to right, involving Rehn, Jansson and Martinsson, whose final shot just misses the target.

• **20 min:** Jansson's 18-metre shot takes a wicked deflection and Zabica does well to dive low to stop the ball.

• **21 min:** Jansson again creates havoc in the Australian defence, but his final pass goes astray.

• **24 min:** Alistair Edwards comes in for van Blerk as the Adelaide crowd starts to get restless and a few boos are being heard.

• **25 min:** Gren slips the ball to Erlingmark, who passes back to Gren, who then sets up Jansson, but the latter's header is well taken by Zabica.

• **26 min:** Mike Petersen replaces Milosevic for his 24th 'A' appearance for Australia.

• **29 min:** Zabica is again well positioned to deal with Eriksson's high ball.

• **30 min:** A fast-breaking "1-2" between Edwards and Petersen ends with Petersen heading over the bar. The ball was only centimetres off-target.

• **31 min:** Johnny Ekstrom and Ken Burwall replace Erlingmark and Rehn.

• **32 min:** Edwards does the job for Australia and gets the elusive Socceroo goal!

An uncharacteristic mistake by Gren gives Edwards a sight of the goal. He sweeps forward before drawing Fedel off his line and drills his shot into the net. It's his first goal for Australia and the first Australia has scored against a European national team since beating Yugoslavia at the 1988 Olympics. Australia 1 Sweden 0.

• **37 min:** Bjorklund hooks the ball away from McCulloch, who was lurking some one metres from the Swedish

goal after a precise Maxwell pass.

• **39 min:** Eriksson has to nip in to backpass to his goalkeeper to break up a threatening Australian attack initiated by Wade.

• **42 min:** A let-off for Australia as it appeared Vidmar handled the ball. Referee McRoe says it happened outside the box, while the Swedes were just as adamant it was inside, and awards a freekick just outside the penalty area which Edwards is only too happy to clear with a hefty kick over the touch line.

• **43 min:** Blagojevic's turn to desperately clear a Gren corner kick into touch.

• **44 min:** Sweden have a final chance to snatch the draw they would have amply deserved, but Eriksson, from only 12 metres, makes a terrible mess of the simplest of shots a few seconds after Wade had tried his luck at the other hand.

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WEEK 341
SAT. 8th FEBRUARY, 1992

RESERVE MATCHES				
★ SCOTTISH PREM. DIVISION	YEOVIL	WELLING UTD.	39	
	ABERDEEN	HIBERNIAN	40	
	CELTIC	AIRDRIE	41	
	HEARTS	DUNDEE U.	42	
	MOTHERWELL	DUNF'MLINE	43	
	S. JOHNSTONE	FALKIRK	44	
SCOTTISH DIVISION 1	ST. MIRREN	RANGERS	45	
	AYR	MEADOWBANK	46	
	DUNDEE	KILMARNOCK	47	
	HAMILTON	CLYDEBANK	48	
	PARTICK	MONTROSE	49	
	RAITH	MORTON	50	
SCOTTISH DIVISION 2	STIRLING A.	FORFAR	51	
	ALLOA	BRECHIN	52	
	ARBROATH	CLYDE	53	
	DUMBARTON	STRANRAER	54	
	EAST FIFE	QUEENS P.	55	

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Phone: 00555 0787 Australia, Wide. Or, Sydney (02) 11520; Melbourne (03) 11521; Brisbane (07) 11699; Adelaide (08) 11521; Perth (09) 11520.
Results are available from 8pm. Sundays, dividends after 5pm Mondays.

**It takes only six
numbers to win.**

WEEK 340
SAT. 1st FEBRUARY 1992

ENGLISH DIVISION 1	ARSENAL	MAN. UTD.	1	1-1
	CRYSTAL P.	COVENTRY	2	0-1
	LEEDS	NOTTS. C.	3	3-0
	NORWICH	SOUTHAMPTON	4	2-1
	NOTTINGHAM F.	SHEFF. UTD.	5	2-5
	Q.P.R.	WIMBLEDON	6	1-1
ENGLISH DIVISION 2	SHEFF. WED.	LUTON	7	3-2
	WEST HAM	OLDHAM	8	1-0
	BLACKBURN	SWINDON	9	2-1
	BRIGHTON	CHARLTON	10	1-2
	BRISTOL C.	BARNSELY	11	0-2
	MIDDLESBRO	GRIMSBY	12	2-0
	MILLWALL	IPSWICH	13	2-3
	OXFORD UTD.	NEWCASTLE	14	5-2
	PLYMOUTH	BRISTOL R.	15	0-0
	PORTSMOUTH	DERBY	16	0-1
ENGLISH DIVISION 3	SOUTHEND	WATFORD	17	1-0
	SUNDERLAND	PORT VALE	18	1-1
	WOLVES	LEICESTER	19	1-0
	BOURNEMOUTH	LEYTON O.	20	0-1
	BURY	EXETER	21	0-2
	CHESTER	STOCKPORT	22	0-0
	FULHAM	BOLTON	23	1-1
	HUDDERSFIELD	PRESTON	24	1-2
	HULL	HARTLEPOOL	25	0-2
	PETERBORO	READING	26	5-3
ENGLISH DIVISION 4	SHREWSBURY	DARLINGTON	27	0-2
	STOKE	SWANSEA	28	2-1
	TORQUAY	BRADFORD C.	29	1-1
	WEST BROM.	BRENTFORD	30	2-0
	BLACKPOOL	BARNET	31	2-0
	CARLISLE	WREXHAM	32	2-0
	CHESTERFIELD	HALIFAX	33	0-2
	GILLINGHAM	DONCASTER	34	2-1
	LINCOLN	YORK	35	0-0
	ROCHDALE	MAIDSTONE	36	2-0
ENGLISH DIVISION 5	ROTHERHAM	ALDRSHOT	37	2-0
	SCARBORO	CREWE	38	0-2



NO. OF TIMES EACH NUMBER OCCURRED										NO. OF WEEKS NUMBER OCCURRED									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
40	44	53	29	38	63	44	66	54	71	0	3	4	15	7	0	15	3	7	2
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
63	66	61	67	67	59	67	54	57	70	6	12	6	3	1	4	1	0	3	2
21	22	21	24	25	28	27	28	29	30	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
56	71	71	66	64	70	64	67	77	89	1	2	0	3	6	2	7	1	0	14
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38			31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38		
77	70	72	79	77	85	70	70			1	4	5	1	0	11		5		

Results History is from Week 38, the start of six from 38 Pools.

Winning Match Numbers (in numerical order):
1, 6, 18, 23, 29, 35.
Supplementary Number: 22.

ENGLISH 15 TH DIVISION									
1. Arsenal 1 Manchester United 1, Crystal Palace 0	26	12	6	33	23	45			
2. Coventry 1, Leeds 3 Notts County 0, Liverpool 0	27	13	5	37	36	44			
3. Chelsea 2, Manchester City 1 Tottenham 0, Norwich	28	14	5	37	36	44			
4. Southampton 1, Nottingham Forest 2 Sheffield	26	11	7	36	38	40			
United 5, Queens Park Rangers 1, Wimbledon 1	26	11	7	36	38	40			
5. Sheffield Wednesday 3 Luton 2, West Ham 1 Oldham	26	11	7	36	38	40			
0, Playing Sunday, Aston Villa v Everton.	26	9	10	6	36	37			
ENGLISH 22 ND DIVISION									
1. Blackburn 2 Swindon 1, Brighton 1 Charlton 2,	26	9	9	8	22	33			
Bristol City 0 Barnsley 2, Middlesbrough v Grimsby	26	9	9	8	22	33			
postponed, Millwall 2 Ipswich 3, Oxford 5 Newcastle	26	9	9	8	22	33			
2. Plymouth 0 Bristol Rovers 0, Portsmouth 0 Derby	26	9	9	8	22	33			
1, Southend 1 Watford 0, Sunderland 1 Port Vale 1,	26	9	9	8	22	33			
Wolverhampton 1 Leicester 0 Played Friday	26	9	9	8	22	33			
Cambridge 0, Tranmere 0	26	9	9	8	22	33			
ENGLISH 3RD DIVISION									
1. Bournemouth 0 Leyton Orient 1, Fulham 1 Bolton	26	9	9	8	22	33			
1, Huddersfield 1 Preston 2, Hull 0 Hartlepool 2,	26	9	9	8	22	33			
Peterborough 5 Reading 3, Shrewsbury 0 Darlington	26	9	9	8	22	33			
2. Stoke 2 Swansea 1, Torquay 1 Bradford 1, West	26	9	9	8	22	33			
Bromwich 2 Brentford 0 Postponed: Bury v Exeter,	26	9	9	8	22	33			
Chester v Stockport.	26	9	9	8	22	33			
ENGLISH 4TH DIVISION									
1. Gillingham 2 Doncaster 1, Lincoln 0 York 0	25	16	3	6	52	29			
(abandoned halftime due to fog) Rotherham 2	25	16	3	6	50	30			
2. Aldershot 0, Walsall 2 Burnley 2 Postponed:	25	16	3	6	50	30			
Barnet, Carlisle v Wrexham 2, Walsall 2	25	16	3	6	50	30			
3. Halifax, Rochdale v Maidstone, Scarborough	25	14	8	5	40	24			
v Crewe, Scunthorpe v Northampton, Played Friday:	25	14	8	5	40	24			
Cardiff 3 Mansfield 2.	25	11	9	5	38	43			
SCOTTISH PREMIER DIVISION									
1. Aberdeen 1 Dunfermline 1, Celtic 2 Falkirk 0,	25	11	9	5	38	43			
Hearts 0 Rangers 0, Motherwell 1 Hibernian 1, St	25	11	9	5	38	43			
Johnstone 1 Dundee United 1, St Mirren 4	25	11	9	5	38	43			
Airdrieonians 1	25	11	9	5	38	43			
SCOTTISH 1ST DIVISION									
1. Ayr 3 Clydebank 1, Dundee 2 Meadowbank 1,	25	8	8	11	28	28			
Hamilton 0 Morton 0, Partick 2 Kilmarnock 1, Raith	25	8	8	11	28	28			
2. Forfar 0, Stirling 4 Montrose 4	25	8	8	11	28	28			
SCOTTISH 2ND DIVISION									
1. Albion 0 East Fife 1, Arbroath 2 Stenhousemuir 0,	25	8	8	11	28	28			
Cowdenbeath 0 Clyde 3, Dumbarton 3 Queen of the	25	8	8	11	28	28			
2. Dundee 1, Dundee United 1, Stirling 1, Stirling	25	8	8	11	28	28			
3. Dundee 1, Dundee United 1, Stirling 1, Stirling	25	8	8	11	28	28			
4. Dundee 1, Dundee United 1, Stirling 1, Stirling	25	8	8	11	28	28			
5. Dundee 1, Dundee United 1, Stirling 1, Stirling	25	8	8	11	28	28			
6. Dundee 1, Dundee United 1, Stirling 1, Stirling	25	8	8	11	28	28			
7. Dundee 1, Dundee United 1, Stirling 1, Stirling	25	8	8	11	28	28			
8. Dundee 1, Dundee United 1, Stirling 1, Stirling	25	8	8	11	28	28			
9. Dundee 1, Dundee United 1, Stirling 1, Stirling	25	8	8	11	28	28			
10. Dundee 1, Dundee United 1, Stirling 1, Stirling	25	8	8	11	28	28			
11. Dundee 1, Dundee United 1, Stirling 1, Stirling	25	8	8	11	28	28			
12. Dundee 1, Dundee United 1, Stirling 1, Stirling	25	8	8	11	28	28			
13. Dundee 1, Dundee United 1, Stirling 1, Stirling	25	8	8	11	28	28			
14. Dundee 1, Dundee United 1, Stirling 1, Stirling	25	8	8	11	28	28			
15. Dundee 1, Dundee United 1, Stirling 1, Stirling									

NORTHERN IRLISH LEAGUE							P	W	D	L	F	Apts			
Ards	1	Bangor	4	Ballyclare	1	Cliftonville	1	Rangers	31	23	4	4	7	21	51
Coleraine	2	Distillery	0	Larne	2	Newry	1	Hibernian	31	25	1	5	6	22	55
Glennavon	2	Ballymena	0	Crusaders	2	Glenfentona	1	Celtic	31	16	8	7	6	32	40
Liffield	1	Portadown	2	Omagh	6	Carrick	2	Hibernian	31	12	13	6	42	30	37
								Aberdeen	31	13	9	9	46	34	35
								Dundee Utd	31	11	12	8	49	38	34
								Motherwell	31	11	12	8	49	38	34
								St Johnst	31	11	6	14	39	54	28
								Falkirk	31	8	8	15	39	53	24
								Airdrie	31	9	5	17	35	51	23
								St Mirren	31	4	8	19	24	56	16
								Dunfermlin	31	4	7	22	13	62	11

JOHNNY WARREN HAS HIS SAY



Ivory Coast celebrate

HORDES of ecstatic Ivorians poured into the streets to celebrate the country's first triumph in the African Nations' cup.

Tens of thousands of people in the capital Abidjan rushed out of their homes moments after watching television coverage of the final in Senegal.

Ivory Coast beat neighbours Ghana 11-10 in a nerve-wracking penalty shootout.

Waving the orange-white-green national flag, thousands jogged and danced their way to the presidency in the plush Cocody suburb, banging car roofs and letting off fire crackers.

Africa's longest-serving president, 86-year-old Felix Houphouët-Boigny, is renowned for his generosity after sporting victories.

Ivorians spent days speculating how much players in the national squad, known as the Elephants, will be rewarded for bringing the coveted cup to Abidjan for the first time.

Television played the best-selling song about the team by captain Gadjiri Celi and a packed studio stood to sing the national anthem.

Ivory Coast's Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara and a crop of ministers were in Dakar's Friendship Stadium and hundreds of ordinary citizens flew to Senegal on special free flights for fans.

The win was a fillip to Ivorians who have had little to cheer about for several years.

Unemployment is rising and living standards are falling steeply because of low prices for coffee and cocoa exports.

TRANSFERS

Domenico Ricci, whose Rome-based company, African Football Management, was recently behind the transfer of three of Ghana's outstanding world champion under-17 team to Torino, said Zambian midfielder Alshos Melu and striker Gibby Mbasela were joining Montpellier and St Etienne of France respectively.

In another deal Nigerian striker Rashid Yekini, the tournament's leading scorer with three goals, will move from his Portu-



Cherif El-Ouazani (Algeria).

guese club Vitoria Setubal to Sochaux in France.

Ricci, a former Italian professional player, has been responsible for the arrival in Senegal of dozens of scouts and agents from all over Europe.

A particularly large contingent of Italian clubs are represented at the finals.

"Italy are taking the

African football scene very seriously now," said Ricci.

"They are a bit lukewarm about some of the players, but a lot will happen in the future, I'm sure."

Africa is now widely regarded as the cheapest source of top talent for European clubs.

Many of the players at the finals are already

employed by European clubs and more than 300 Africans are European-based professionals.

COACHES

Algeria's veteran coach Abdelhamid Kermali has confirmed his resignation after the holders were knocked out early in the African Nations' Cup

finals.

"My decision is irrevocable," Kermali said.

"I feel I have accomplished all I can with the Algerian team."

"The president of the Algerian Federation does not agree, however."

"He's trying to make me change my mind, but I don't want to."

"I have to take full responsibility for the team's displays here."

Algeria were beaten 3-0 by Ivory Coast and drew 1-1 with Congo in the qualifying rounds — not good enough!

Mahmoud El-Gohary, who coached Egypt to the finals of the World Cup last year, has also quit.

El-Gohary said his fatal mistake was failing to scout other African teams.

He said arranging games against European teams had left him too little time.

In 1990, the tempestuous 53-year-old former star player led a lightly regarded Egypt to an impressive showing in its first World Cup appearance in 56 years.

Despite playing in a strong group, Egypt held Holland and Ireland to draws before losing 1-0 to England at Palermo.

SHOW CASE

Africa's two-week Nations Cup tournament was a grand showpiece for European clubs looking for new talent.

While Africa determined its champion, the tournament was being watched by representatives of more than 25 European clubs in search of African talent.

France and Italy sent the biggest contingents of scouts.

Seven of the First Division clubs in each country had representatives at the tournament.

Clubs from Belgium, Germany, Portugal, Switzerland and Turkey also had scouts looking for bargain buys among players from the 23 competing countries at the tournament that ended last week.

African players have been in increasing demand in Europe since the success of Cameroon at the 1990 World Cup finals and the emergence of West African teams in recent junior tournaments.

Before the start of the Nations' Cup finals, about 250 Africans were playing in European First and Second Divisions and at least another 50 in the Middle East, Asia and South America.

SKILL

The African players are prized for their technical skill and flam-

boyant style, as well as their low price tags.

"It is a lot less expensive to buy a quality player with international experience in Africa than it is for a counterpart of the same standard in Europe," said agent Willi Hopman, who represents clubs in Belgium and Germany.

And there are plenty of African players keen to move to Europe for salaries sometimes 50 times more than they receive in Africa.

"I can say without doubt 99 percent of the players at this tournament who have not already signed for a professional club in Europe want to go and play there," said Icertain Tsoumou, Congo's international defender and one of the stars of this 18th edition of the tournament.

Tsoumou's three excellent performances for his country have seen him swamped with offers.

Zambians Derby Mankinda and Gibby Mbasela are being chased by leading French clubs St Etienne and Montpellier.

Nigerian striker Rachidi Yekini is set to move from his present club in Portugal to Lyon, also in the French First Division.

PRIZE

For most of the Africans, as with soccer players elsewhere, the biggest prize is a place in a team in the 18-club Italian league.

Since restrictions on foreigners were eased beginning in 1982, only one African has played in Italy's first division.

But Torino late last year signed three members of Ghana's under-17 team, which won the World Junior Cup, and more Africans are expected to move to Italy this year.

Italian agents have shown a big interest in Jean-Claude Pagal and Francois Omam-Biyik of Cameroun.

Both play in France.

Britain was the only major European soccer nation without scouts at the tournament and had only one player in the competition — Nigeria's Reuben Agboola, who plays for Third Division Welsh club Swansea.

"It is really a disgrace," said John Fashanu, the English international forward who attended the tournament to help prepare a television documentary.

"English clubs just do not realise what they are missing out on."

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GREG BLAKE PULLS NO PUNCHES

Big Steve ready for action



SOUTH Melbourne champion Steve Blair has pledged to make every post a winner when he returns from a thirteen game spell on the sidelines this week against Marconi.

Blair, South Melbourne's 320 game club record holder, has promised to never take his career with Melbourne's highest profile club for granted again following his longest-ever injury run.

"I've learned plenty", said Blair.

"I've been around the club for a long time and maybe you start getting a little bit complacent and you need a kick in the backside just to sort of remind you that you are playing at a top club and that you are not a certainty to always be around", he admitted.

"You need that sort of smack in the face to make you put in a little more."

"And from a team point of view I think it is important that we collectively recognise that we are not going to win every game."

"At the start of the season we were winning every game at home quite comfortably, but we have to learn that we are also going to have these (bad) spells."

"If Hellas loses two games in a row it's a crisis, so collectively we have to mature and learn to say that we've gone through the spell and we've just got to roll our sleeves up and get back to work."

Blair concedes his three month absence, compliments of a recurring hamstring problem, was made all the more difficult as he



The very under-rated Steve Blair in full cry.

stood back and watched his team mates seemingly on the ropes.

As Hellas battled through a miserable festive season run, Blair was undergoing a period of enforced and complete rest and hat-

"It's the first time I have ever experienced it (being out for a long period) and it was very frustrating", he told ABSW.

"But the experience will hold me in good stead for when and if it happens again."

"The physio keeps asking me how old I am and says that the older I get, the more injuries I'm going to get."

"But I think I'll be OK."

"As for the team, that 7-1 win (v West Adelaide) was perfect for the break because imagine how they might have felt resting for two weeks with the taste of defeat."

"It really surprised me to see things going as badly as they were before that game though."

"One of the things that got the team through last year was that there were no superstars, there was no bagging each other and we were a unit."

"It was really surprising to hear players saying that we were 'gone', or that players were not happy with other players."

"That happens at other clubs but not with South Melbourne."

"But I am sure that was just a spell we were going through and we just needed

that (West Adelaide) result for us to get the old confidence back."

As for those who doubt the ability of South Melbourne to return to the winner's dais on grand final day again this season, the Middle Park legend says wait and see.

According to Blair, once the Hellas lads get a scent of the finals again, the true character of the team will begin to shine through once again.

"The championship itself isn't the lure this year", he explained.

"Last year, when we hadn't won one, that was the carrot dangling."

"Now that carrot has changed to back-to-back."

"The boys have had a feel of winning the championship and sometimes that can be a bad thing because they might feel that it doesn't matter if they lose because they have already done it."

"This season the approach has been one of 'Well we'll become one of the clubs who have done it (back-to-

back)', and that is the carrot dangling."

"As long as we are there or thereabouts come finals time, that's when the adrenalin really starts pumping and the wagon starts rolling."

"You can really feel it at finals time and it makes you determined."

"Each player then has to make their own decision as to whether they want to win it again, or will it be good enough just to make the finals?"

Italian legends set to come

NINE of the legendary thirteen players who carried Italy to World Cup success in 1982 have been named in the 21-strong Italian squad set to tour Australia in late February.

The Italian legends tour will take in three

games in late February, with matches against representative teams in Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne.

Named in the touring party are nine players who appeared for Italy in the successful 1982 final against West Germany, including heart-throb Paul Rossi, the goalscoring

hero of that series.

Enzo Bearzot has been named manager of the touring side.

The brainchild of Tony Labbozzetta, the legends series is being backed and organised by Victorian Premier League chairman Joe Caruso and Melbourne's four Italian-supported Premier Lea-

gue clubs, Bulleen, Brunswick Juventus, Fawkner and Thomastown.

Caruso believes this tour could be a stepping stone towards getting the full Italian international team to visit Australia.

"Although the clubs are doing this on a nationalistic basis by

trying to put on a show for the Italian community here, it could lead to bigger things", said Caruso.

"If we give a good account of ourselves the reports will get back to the Italian authorities and we might become of interest to the A team".

The Melbourne

game has been scheduled for Olympic Park on February 27 with the opponent of the Italian side likely to be a local combine of NSL players.

The Italian legends fly into Melbourne on February 23 before heading to Adelaide and then returning to Melbourne for a gala night

arranged in their honour.

The touring party heads to Sydney on February 28.

The preliminary list of Italian players on tour is: Rossi, Altobelli, Causio, Graziani, Conti, Bordon, Gentile, Cabrini, Orsini, Sala, Pruzzo, Bagni, Zaccarelli, Copparoni, Roggi, Filippi, Fontolan, Carilli, Guida, Gentile and Mozzini.

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All the latest news from Victoria

Clarkson wants a go!

BRIGHTON's Aussie midfielder star David Clarkson has made an emotional plea to Socceroo supremo Edie Thomson.

"Don't forget about me Thommo", Clarkson told ABSW from his Brighton apartment this week.

Clarkson, currently playing well enough to keep Brighton and Hove Albion skipper Dean Wilkins out of the second division English side, showed his devotion to the Australian cause recently.

Only a matter of hours after Brighton had crashed out of the FA Cup in a 2-1 loss against Bolton, the chirpy Clarkson was on the hotline to home eager to find out how the Socceroos had fared in the opening clash against Sweden.

"If he (Thomson) only knew how much I want to play for Australia one day", the dashing blond said.

"When I signed for Brighton, as I hold dual citizenship, I was asked to sign a form asking me whether I would want to play for Australia or England.

"There was simply

no chance that I would ever make any other choice than Australia.

"Now I desperately want my chance".

The just turned 24 year-old former Adelaide City and Sunshine George Cross star is looking forward to returning home at the end of the English season, despite having made tremendous headway in his first six months at the Goldstone Ground.

Including the FA Cup game, Clarkson had improved his senior record to 16 first team appearances, first off the bench and then as a starter.

"It's brilliant being full time and (wife) Debbie and I both like the apartment we are living in here", he told ABSW.

"But we'll be home straight away (after the season) for a break as we miss home and family too much.

"The lads here are great, but my heart is always with Australia".

Clarkson says he can only envy the likes of Bari's Aussie international Frank Farina.

Farina made back page lead in the 'Daily Mirror' recently, billed as "The Wizard of Oz" as Leeds United



DAVID CLARKSON

manager Howard Wilkinson made an audacious \$3 million bid for his services.

"He is big news over here at the moment", explained Clarkson.

"As for me, I don't think I can play any better than I am at the moment.

"I know it is difficult for him (Thomson) to have any players back for one-off

games.

"But I hope he knows I am there and waiting if he needs me.

"All I can say to Eddie is that if he gives me a chance, he will not be disappointed".

NEARLY a decade after reaching what would appear to be the zenith of his career, Melbourne Croatia veteran Theo Selemidis is preparing for his greatest challenge.

As a talented teenager Selemidis played senior football with Heidelberg back in the inaugural 1977 NSL season, and by the early 1980s had played in a grand final winning team (1980) and worn the coveted green and gold jersey of the Australian side.

But after what has seemed an eternity in the anonymous wilderness of the ranks of the NSL, the 300 plus games stalwart is heading Melbourne Croatia's charge for a first national title.

Although always a superbly fit player of some considerable ability, Selemidis admits that only this season has he started to recapture the type of form and consistency which propelled him into national team calculations.

"I'd certainly agree that this has been my best season for some time", he told ABSW.

"I know I've had two or three seasons below how I know I can perform and I blame myself for that.

"My attitude was too relaxed and maybe I was going out too much and not keeping my mind on the job".

Selemidis, now happily married and with a young son, says settling down had "done wonders" for him.

With his mind now locked in on the job of taking Croatia to a long-awaited championship, Selemidis is cashing in on his remarkable fitness by holding down a key defensive role at Somers Street.

And the last thing on his mind is giving the game away.

"I'll only stop when the young fellows are running rings around me at training", he says.

"At this stage I am enjoying my football as much as I have in years and it helps playing alongside a terrific bunch of guys as well.

"As for my fitness, I can't say that I work too hard.

"Generally I've been pretty lucky with no major injuries over my career, but one thing I have learned is that you do have to put in on the track.

"During training I always put in 100 percent and, whilst most players do that, there are some who cruise a little bit.

"They are usually the ones who don't make it".

Selemidis has come close to cementing his place in Croatia's first eleven with a series of sterling displays during the club's recent spate of injuries.

But even he concedes that for the sake of the club's title push, the return of the injured brigade after the season break will be crucial to Croatia's chances.

"The point is that we will now have a battle for positions again, and that can only be good for the team", he explained.

"If you know you are in the senior team every week complacency can sneak in.

"But when the full squad is available you have to keep putting in 100 percent if you are to keep your place.

"Not that the players need much incentive.

"We've still got a bitter taste in our mouths after the grand final and we desperately want to reverse that this season.

"The fact that we are up there again is proving that we weren't lucky to be there last year.

"We know it will not be easy, but we have something to prove to ourselves and only a grand final win will erase the bad memories".

New Vic medal to Grand Final best

THE Victorian Premier League is set to follow in the footsteps of the NSL and other senior Australian football codes by introducing a medal to be awarded to the player adjudged best-on-ground in the grand final.

And Victorian Soccer Federation Premier League chairman Joe Caruso has also revealed that the 1992 grand final, the first ever to decide the state champion of Victoria, is likely to carry substantial prizemoney for the winner if a major sponsor can be found.

Last year's champion team Brunswick Juventus — the last Victorian championship team to be crowned on a first-past-the-post basis — won nothing but the silverware and the applause for their efforts.

Caruso said the grand final medal would be named in honour of one of Victorian soccer's greats, either playing or coach-

ing.

All-time greats such as World Cup heroes Jack Reilly, Jim Rooney and Jimmy MacKay must surely be considered for the honour.

Caruso said that the Premier League's first meaningful grand final series, culminating in the grand final on September 20, would become the crown jewel in the Victorian season.

"We are looking forward to the change in format and what promises to be an exciting year in the history of the competition", Caruso said of the season which kicks off in the last week of February.

"The grand final looks set to be broadcast live (on 3AK), so that is another positive step and our involvement with ABSW and the media will be heavy again.

"Promotion is crucial to the season and the new format finals series is the key to the season".

Caruso said that the option on finals venues is open at this stage.

Although the Premi-

er League would be keen to reward clubs with home advantage for finals games, Caruso said there was clearly a problem with the quality of facilities.

"We would like to have the games at the homes of Premier League clubs but, if the series is to be the showpiece of the competition, we need to utilise the best grounds available", he explained.

"Few of the Premier League clubs could justify games of that importance at this stage.

"But if there are clubs which can improve their facilities to a certain degree, then we would like to reward those clubs.

"Perhaps that will be an incentive for clubs to do as much as they can at their grounds".

Caruso is hopeful that, despite the financial restraints placed on the clubs and the Federation in the current depressed Victorian climate, the Premier League would be bigger and better in its second season since replacing the old State

League competition.

"I can see further improvement this year and I expect further improvement next year", he told ABSW.

"I think clubs are starting to see things in the long term and are prepared to make the commitment to the improvement of facilities and other areas of importance.

"The biggest problem at the moment is that we cannot push the clubs too much financially, as they are struggling.

"But at least they are trying.

"The NSL promotion issue was a bitter pill to swallow for Victorian clubs but they are starting to understand that the ball does not stop rolling with them.

"We (the VSF) are trying to give the clubs some guidance for the future as well as something to aspire to.

"The biggest thing is obviously the top five and what it will mean as the climax of the season.

"If we do this properly, the season could be a great one for Vic-

toria's competition."

Caruso believes the three Premier League newcomers — North Geelong, Knox City and NSL reject Sunshine George Cross — will all boost the profile of the league.

"As far as professionalism is concerned, they will surprise everyone", he says of much-maligned Knox City.

"They have a fine facility and the attitude of the club committee cannot be faulted.

"Having major soccer in Geelong will be a big plus, and Sunshine George Cross is an NSL standard club".

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As it happens in New South Wales

Big prize money

A total of \$8,500 in prizemoney will go on the line for the 1992 NSW Seven-a-side competitions over both the Super League and Federation League One.

The Super League Sevens winners will pocket \$5,000, an increase of \$2,000 over the 1991 figure, with the runner-up receiving \$1,500.

For Federation League One the winners' purse is \$1,500, with \$500 to second place.

Federation directors decided to utilise the excellent facilities of the Gabbie Stadium at Seven Hills for both series.

The Super League Sevens, with all its excitement, will be staged on Sunday, March 15.

The first kick-off takes place at 9am for the Pool 1 clash between Sunderland Shire and Warringah Dolphins.

Each club has at least two matches of ten minutes each way, with countbacks applicable if pool winners are not decided under the two points for a win, one for a draw and one for a loss rule.

Semi-finals are timed for 3.45pm and 4.15pm, and the final for 5.15pm.

All 12 Super League teams compete, along with the top two teams from each of Newcastle and Illawarra.

The pools are:

Pool 1: Sutherland Shire, Warringah Dolphins, Illawarra 1; Newcastle 1, includes pre-

miers Sutherland and Sevens 1991 winners Warringah.

Pool 2: Adamstown Rosebud, Eastern Suburbs, Sydney Macedonia, Canterbury Marrickville.

Pool 3: Blacktown City, Wollongong Macedonia, Avala, Illawarra 2.

Pool 4: Canberra Metro, St George BSC, Rockdale Ilinden, Newcastle 2.

The Federation League One Sevens takes place as early as Sunday, February 23.

This links in with the start of the premiership, set down for February 29/March 1.

Federation League One has two more teams than the Super League, which calls for four more games over the season, and the earlier start.

Illawarra club three and four will compete in the League One Sevens, with 1991 winners Granville Chile and Liverpool Yugal kicking off the first game at 9am, with the competition working through to a 5.15pm final.

The four pools are:

Pool 1: Granville Chile, Liverpool Yugal, Cyprus United, Polonia.

Pool 2: Illawarra 4, Auburn United, Lemnos Allstars, Campbelltown Macarthur Rams.

Pool 3: Mt Pritchard, Mt Druitt Town, Central Coast, West Wanderers United.

Pool 4: Illawarra 3, Petersham Lusitanos, Dulwich Hill, Gladesville Hornsby.

Shire face start minus star guests



SHANE CLINCH

LAST year's NSW State League premiers Sutherland expect to open their 1992 NSW Super League commitments without the services of three established stars, defender Mike O'Shea, striker Grant Bard and midfielder Shane Clinch.

O'Shea's and Bard's appearances for the Sharks depend upon when Wollongong City's National League commitments end, and as it stands they have strong expectations of being involved in the Grand Finals series in April.

Both players are on loan to the Wolves, who are having an outstanding season.

Clinch is really doing it tough. The Apia Leichhardt star, who plays with Sunderland on a loan agreement, already has had two arthroscopies, and is still in trouble.

His position for the coming winter season is in serious doubt.

But the news from Seymour Shaw Park isn't all grim — in fact coach Bill Rigby can see a lot of positives.

"The huge Sutherland Shire nursery is working as well as ever, and 50 to 60 players are turning out for the trials," he said.

"We are carefully sifting through the prospects, and in addition there are some strong contenders looking for regular first team spots."

Rigby has high expectations for lively 23-year-old midfielder Harry Christodoulou, who increased his experience by playing in the Cypriot First Division during the Australian summer.

Well in mind are Chris Condoleon, who can settle in well at either left or right of midfield, and Scott Connors, who plays either at the front or back.

Also trying out are a couple of British players who are keen to win places.

Kiwi international Kevin Hagan is in full training.

He would be a tremendous asset with his height and scoring ability, but the most likely outcome for him is that he returns to New Zealand, where he has retained his house.

Bill Rigby is more than happy with the spirit displayed at training, and is looking forward to another productive year for his Soccer Sharks.

At this early stage he won't be drawn into saying that the first-ever NSW Super League title will lob in at Seymour Shaw Park, but obviously Sutherland is aiming to rank high amongst the contenders.

Sash is on move

SYDNEY Macedonia's talented midfielder Sasha Spirovski is likely to move on this year, and all the talk is that he will end up with coach Rale Basic at Canterbury Marrickville Olympic.

In addition, Macedonia is reconciled to losing the services of reliable Fabian Kadric, who is retiring from senior football at the age of 28.

And the dedicated Billy Pilovski has switched to Rockdale Ilinden, where he will coach the youth side as well as assist Lube Jancev with the senior squad.

Sydney Macedonia's quietly spoken coach, Frank Lang, is intent on making four additions to his squad.

"Regular goalkeeper Tony Avellino is staying on, but we need a backup as well.

"The feelers are also out for a sweeper, midfielder and a striker. We have some ideas on who we want, but it will be a little while yet before the players are in place," Lang said.

Amateurs alive



BRIAN ELLEM

THROUGHOUT the month of February Statewide promotions and registrations for associations are being held.

This year Manly Warringah Soccer Association kick off the first promotional day on Saturday February 1 at Warringah Mall.

In attendance at the promotional day will be Brian Ellem and a number of APLA NSL players along with Robert Wheatley (captain

of Melita).

Also present for the morning proceeding will be Moya Dodd and Anissa Tann, both members of the Australian women's team. To top the day, Mike Hill will be the host for the day's event.

All clubs in the Manly area will come together at Warringah Mall to set up and register players in an attempt to increase overall memberships.

The promotional day will allow clubs to make people aware of

their existence and also to advertise themselves in a busy central venue where possible.

The following centres will host the clubs in an association area:

February 1: Warringah Mall — Manly Warringah

February 8: Westfields Parramatta — Granville

February 15: Roselands — Canterbury; Bankstown Square — Bankstown.

February 22: Macarthur Square — Macarthur

North Queensland kid hopes to break through with United

GUY HAND LOOKS AT THE SUNSHINE STATE

FORMER North Queensland youngster Brad Ditton has made all the right moves during his brief soccer career and is hoping the run will continue if he joins Brisbane United.

Ditton, 17, returned from the Australian Institute of Sport recently and is currently training with United.

The NSL club are hoping to sign the Australian youth squad member as an apprentice and have started talking terms with the former Mackay junior.

If United do sign Ditton, they will be hoping he performs as well as another Mackay product, Chris Slater, who has been one of the NSL's finds this season.

But Ditton said he and his parents were still talking to United officials, although he was keen to sign with the Brisbane side.

"I've been training with them for the past two weeks and we talked terms on Friday night," Ditton said.

"I really am keen to sign with Brisbane United but it depends on what happens in the talks."

Insiders have predicted a big future for Ditton should he sign with United, with many saying he has the

class to make United's first team before the season is out.

Moving to Brisbane permanently won't present a problem to Ditton, who spent 16 months at the AIS under head coach Ron Smith.

The Lismore-born midfielder has been prepared to make whatever geographical moves were necessary to advance his soccer career, including leaving Mackay at 15 for Toowoomba, 100km west of Brisbane and more than 1000km from home.

"The standard in Mackay is not as good as it is in other areas, so I thought if I wanted to get to the top, I'd have to move," Ditton said.

"I didn't think I was really good enough to play XXXX League in Brisbane at 15, so I went to Toowoomba to play first division for Wanderers."

It was during Ditton's stay in Toowoomba he first came to the AIS head coach's attention.

"I was part of the Australian under-16 identification squad at the time and Ron Smith saw me in that," Ditton said.

"From there I was offered a scholarship at the AIS."

"I improved heaps, learned heaps — it was spot-on."

"It was very hard to leave — almost as hard as it was to leave home."

"You get very close to all the guys who are there and it's sort of like a family."

Family is all important to the former Queensland junior rep, who cites his parents Robert and Robyn as two of the major driving forces in his career.

"Mum and Dad have really supported me no matter what I wanted to do in soccer," Ditton said.

"They've been really great to me in terms of support."

Ditton has set himself a nice target should he sign with United — breaking into the first team squad within four weeks.

"I should be able to play four games before the season is over," Ditton said.

"I've set a deadline for myself that I make the first-team squad within two or three games if I do sign."

Ditton has a wealth of experience in the National Youth League under his belt, but said he knows the standard would be much higher in NSL.

"A lot of people I've spoken to said it's the same sort of standard, but it's played at a much quicker pace," Ditton said.

Ditton, who completed Year 12 last year, is also currently negotiating with three XXXX League clubs for the winter season, Brisbane Lions, Taringa and Mt Gravatt.

But he said he would make his choice only after he had agreed terms with Brisbane United.



Brisbane United's Chris Slater

Coach Bleiberg keeps mum!

BRISBANE United coach Miron Bleiberg is keeping tight-lipped about whether his side will risk a high mid-table position to play all out for an unlikely NSL finals berth.

United's final five chances are slim, but with eight games to go before the finals, it is still mathematically possible for the club to make the semis in their first NSL season.

Bleiberg said he was not sure whether to go all out and possibly

drop into the lower reaches of the table, or consolidate a mid-table position and build on that for next season.

"I went to our committee and asked them for direction on what our aim should be for the rest of the season," Bleiberg said.

"We could play careful soccer, cement a place mid-table and be happy with our achievements for the year."

"Our target at the start of the season was not to finish in the bottom two spots, so if we were to play careful

soccer, we could certainly achieve that."

"We could also decide to take advantage of the fact there is no relegation this season and give some of our younger players a run, as they are the future of our club."

"Then again, we could steam ahead, play ambitious soccer and try and make the top five by hook or by group."

"We might be lucky enough to make it or we could end up sinking the bottom of the table."

"I'll adopt the direction the club wants me to try for."

Bleiberg said it was not a case of the committee interfering with how the team played.

"This is how it should be between the committee and the coach," Bleiberg said.

"They should not be saying that the left defender should be doing this and someone else should be playing like this."

"But the policies and general direction the club should take is a matter for the coach and committee to work out."

"It's all about positive interaction between the committee and the coach."

"This is something there is not much of in Australian soccer."

While United's chances of NSL finals glory are slim to say the least, they are still in the running for the NSL Cup final berth.

United play Marconi on March 3 in a cup semi-final, although no venue has been decided for the match.

Bleiberg has played down the cup date in recent weeks preferring to concentrate on the league.

But silverware in United's first NSL season would be a huge boost to the club's profile in Brisbane.

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Hearts poised to visit



STEVE MAXWELL



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ROBERT ZABICA

Manager Joe Jordan's Scottish Premier League shocktroops Heart of Midlothian could visit SA in May.

The SA Soccer Federation is negotiating to bring the high-ranking Scottish side here as part of an initiative with the Queensland Soccer Federation.

With players of the calibre of Henry Smith, Tosh McKinlay, Dave McPherson, Craig Levein, John Robertson, Derek Ferguson and Scott Crabbe in the line-up, the Edinburgh side would be a likely drawcard.

SASF commissioner Neil McGachey is keen to see the Jam Tarts here.

He is a lifelong fan of the club.

But the SA public maybe should not hold its breath over the tour. A similar visit was mooted last year but fell through over financial considerations.

Azzurri is looking forward to a more positive 1992.

"With the calibre of players we had last year we were a little disappointed how things finished," team boss Karl Drosd said.

"We had one or two internal troubles last year and missed too many scoring opportunities.

"We don't want to look too far ahead but we hope for a better year with our good squad.

"We have several youngsters, too, who could be pushing for places this season."

Duane Gray is club captain for 1992 with giant goalkeeper Bruno Silvestri his deputy.

The club is looking for big things from State striker Jeff Tyson, from Salisbury, and former Adelaide City attacking midfielder Zoran Karadzic.

Enfield City coach Rocky Aloisi has bolstered his side's second division hopes with the signing of several top Adelaide City youngsters.

Defenders Daniel Sabatino, Mark Camilleri and Alf Ianniello, midfielders Corey Artone and Nathan Day and striker Carmine Maio have joined their former coach at Blair Athol.

Artone and Sabatino will play with Enfield once Adelaide City's



ERNIE TAPAI

Ampol Cup commitments are complete.

Aloisi also has fixed up Cumberland's Robert Ditroia and Tony Morgillo.

"We are starting to make progress. The fa-

cilities and people here are good and I'm setting in fine. It will be a testing season but we are looking forward to it," Aloisi said.

Former State team

player and Foundation SA Player of the Year Paul Wilde may sit out of soccer this year.

Salisbury player Wilde has increased business commitments this year and sought a

loan move to Birkalla Eagles, a club nearer his southern districts home.

Transfer talks stalled, though, and Wilde now is contemplating cooling his heels out of the game.

New FIFA referee Tom McRoe handled his first international since gaining his FIFA badge in Australia's 1-0 win over Sweden at Hindmarsh Stadium.

McRoe, who has made steady progress through the ranks in SA, had a quietly efficient performance in a game that did not set the pulse racing.

West Adelaide midfielder general Mark Brazzale was delighted with his performance for the Olympic Games squad in its 2-1 win over SA at Hindmarsh Stadium.

The former Youth Soccerroo was a late call-up for the squad and backed official faith with a reproduction of his outstanding recent club form.

Brazza now turns his attention to this weekend's crucial Coca-Cola Soccer League clash with Preston.

"We had a good run and were building up a bit of confidence before we were hit 7-1 by South Melbourne," Brazzale said.

"We have to get back on the winning way this weekend. Really we had chances against South Melbourne and did not take them and every time they attacked they scored. It was one of those games."

Adelaide City will line-up against Italy's World Cup-winning side of 1982 on February 25 at Hindmarsh Stadium.

The Italians who beat Germany 3-2 in the final to clinch the Jules Rimet Trophy will be led by Enzo Bearzot.

Polonia has signed State defender Graham Campbell who polled highly in last year's Foundation SA Player of the Year voting.

Campbell is the son of former FIFA referee Donald Campbell who, ironically, played briefly with Polonia when he first arrived in SA from Scotland.

South Australia



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New look Indoor League will be a big boost for the game

**From our man
in Canberra
Graham Cooke**

A new-look National Indoor Soccer League will feature state rather than club sides in a Sheffield Shield-type competition, Australian Futsal's chief executive officer, Joe Brent, said.

In Canberra for the Australian Championships, Brent said that under the old system, progress had been marred by inter-club squabbling.

"We found it was dividing the crowds," he said. "Sydney people would not turn up to matches in Sydney unless it was their club playing. We hope that by calling the entry 'NSW' we can get everyone along all the time."

Initially, the ACT, NSW, Victoria and Queensland will each supply two teams.

"Western Australia especially are upset at not being included, but at this stage it is a matter of cost."

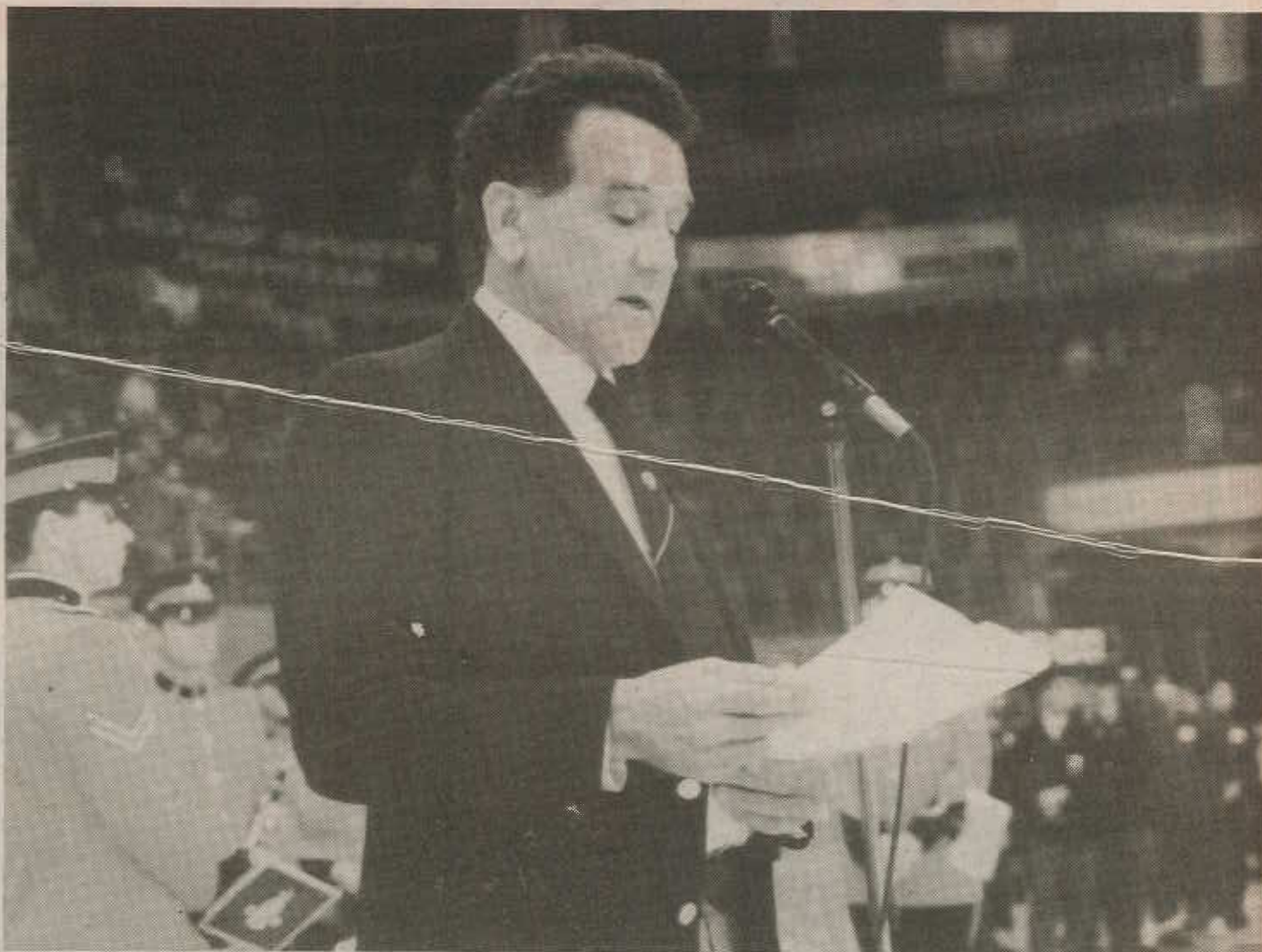
"We haven't forgotten them."

The league will return to its original summer time slot, running from October to March.

The first indoor world cup since the merger of indoor soccer with outdoor's governing body, FIFA, will take place in Hong Kong in November.

"We are in a qualifying competition along with New Zealand and Vanuatu, and that will be held in Brisbane on June 6, 7 and 8," he said.

Former ACT Soccer Federation president Charles Perkins, now living in Alice Springs, was re-elected president at Futsal's annual meeting. Eane Whitton (Victoria) also retains the vice presidency.



Futsal president Charles Perkins

ACT BRIEFS

Coach Steve Bryant may have been a little disappointed when he recalled the 5000 crowds he once played in front of at Bruce Stadium, but most ACTSF officials expressed satisfaction with the 2126 attendance at last week's ACT v Australian Olympic team game.

Bryant's impatience is understandable, but if there is to be a way back for ACT soccer it will take much longer than one game to accomplish.

The code in Canberra has been in almost continuous decline for a decade during which it lost its place in the national league, was exiled from Bruce Stadium and saw crowds for its premier club slip from the thousands to a few hundred. The ACT League, once able to command four-figure attendances for top games, is now often faced with the embarrassment of seeing players and officials outnumber the spectators.

Problems of this magnitude cannot be mended in five min-

utes: supporters and organisers of the game must be prepared for months, probably years of hard work if soccer is to return to its once prominent place in the ACT sporting hierarchy.

Yet the Olympic game has at least given an answer to despairing officials who were beginning to believe soccer is no longer promotable in Canberra. The attendance was the best since 1989 and generally responded to the home side's gallant attempt to match superior opponents.

That leads to another area — the potential pulling power of inter-state competition.

Long neglected, it is now being seen by senior officials as a complement to the Coca-Cola National League, and a way of involving all areas of Australia.

ACTSF president Ron Watkins wants to see a program established and the NSW Federation's general manager, Peter Thorne, is also a supporter.

Thorne believes that for a sponsorship as small as \$10,000 per state, a viable nationwide competition could be set up.

And he wants to see all parties get round

The impossible dream comes true for Apollo

THE impossible dream came within one match of coming true for Canberra club Apollo at the Australian Futsal Championships at the Australian Institute of Sport.

After being written off by everyone including its own players, after a first-match loss, the Northside outfit put together an outstanding series of wins to reach the final of the youth division.

But there it came face to face with the realities of the game — an excellent Sydney team called United — and lost 5-1.

But in getting that far it had to battle injuries, absent players and, in the semi-final, an appeal by beaten opponent Windaroo over the age of captain Claudio Palombi.

Palombi, whose burly form and receding hairline does give him the appearance of being older than he is, had to produce his driver's licence to prove he was one week under the maximum age for this division.

The difference between the two finalists came in the shape of a slight youth with an explosive shot — Paul Richardson.

A shade on the gangly side and with a haircut and earnest good looks which might have found him the part of an extra in Chariots of Fire, Richardson destroyed the opposition with four fine goals, most from unstoppable shots taken well outside the normal strike area.

This was no reflection on Apollo goalkeeper Joe Molina, whose mixture of acrobatics and raw courage kept the score from being far higher.

The Canberra team simply had no flexibility to deal with this kind of opposition. While it had managed to rake up seven players for the final, both Matt Haigh and Allan King were carrying injuries. Palombi, the scorer of his side's solitary goal, was also heavily strapped.

After its success in the state championships, the club titles were generally disappointing for the ACT. The almost complete domination in 13 Boys was continued with an all-local final, Red Devils beating the Gators by the only goal of the game.

There was an outstanding result in 13 Girls, in which Bellbirds, with some players up to two years below the maximum age, beat Russell Lea 4-0, two goals each coming from Amy Wilson and Helen Stensholt.

the table to design a calendar, which would leave the maximum number of players free to take part.

"It could be done in

conjunction with national team fixtures at a time when league programs are already suspended," he said.

The important ele-

ment is forward planning.

"With a positive attitude from all concerned, we can make things happen."

Futsal tends special needs

AUSTRALIAN Futsal aims to set up 'special' divisions in all major centres to cater for intellectually handicapped people who want to play indoor soccer.

Chief executive of Futsal, Joe Brent, said the aim was to have these divisions fully integrated into competitions.

"And if that leads one day to an intellectually handicapped player representing his country at Open level, then so be it."

"Our policy is sport for all — we want everyone in Australia to have the chance to kick our ball."

Brent said he had been involved in founding the Bankstown-East Hills Association for the Handicapped "many years ago".

He said its emphasis was on therapy through activity and he pushed for integration into the sporting scene.

"I got some young men into a high school weightlifting program and that worked well — it ended with some of the intellectually handicapped lifters coaching others," he said.

With indoor soccer part of the Para Olympics, there is a need to identify players for a national team.

"We thought we might have to start from scratch, but in fact there are already teams up and running in South Australia, Western Australia, Queensland and NSW," Brent said.

"It was just a matter of co-ordination."

Australian Futsal has provided coaches for clinics around the country and the result was a Special section, comprising six regional teams, at the Australian Futsal Championships in Canberra.

"The NSW Department of Sport and Recreation believes there are 4000 handicapped people in Sydney alone who can benefit from our program," Brent said.

NEW SOUTH WA

Picture Parade By Anton Cermak



THE OLYROOS



Olyroo striker David Seal and NSW keeper Bob Catlin.



NSW goalkeeper, Mike Gibson.

LES V OLYROOS



THE NSW SQUAD



Olyroo Damian Mori in full flight.

AROUND THE NATION

Pezzano has his say!

No pay is big worry

BY GRAHAM COOKE

WOLLONGONG City's ex-Socceroo goalkeeper Tony Pezzano measures the quality of the games he has played in by the state of his gear.

"If I walk off the park as clean as when I went on, when everyone around me is knackered, then I feel I have done my job," he said in Canberra recently.

"If I'm dirty and tired then something has gone wrong.

"I'm a demanding type of player. I like to run games from the back, and if the defenders do their job properly, I should have an easy time.

"In the ideal match, I'm standing there directing operations. The goalkeeper is the one player in the team who can see everything that's going on, so he's best for the job."

Over the years Tony Pezzano has had no doubts about being best for the job. The long hair and the demonstrative style has made him one of the characters of the National Soccer League, and while the hair has been trimmed the old competitive spirit is

still very much in evidence.

When asked if he had special memories of the game, he said they came every week of the season.

"There's no greater pleasure than to put on a shirt on a Sunday and go out there to play in front of people. I think to myself: 'I'm being paid to do something I love' — that's pretty special."

Pezzano was in Canberra as an instructor for the ACT Soccer Federation's summer coaching school at Wanniasa — a last-minute deputy for Socceroo captain Paul Wade who had to withdraw because of business commitments.

If any of the children were disappointed, they were quickly won over by his drive and enthusiasm.

"I was asked to do the job just the day before," he said. "All I knew was that it was with kids — and that's something I really enjoy."

"Football is a passion for me. I've been in the NSL since the beginning, and if there's something I can do to help the game I'll be there."

A Canterbury junior, he was spotted by Sydney City in the months before the start of the first NSL



TONY PEZZANO

season in 1977 and asked to come into the club for discussions about signing.

"I was 16 years old and very green. I hadn't the faintest idea that Sydney City Harbours was one of the leading clubs in the country and that it was a privilege to even be asked to train with them, let alone get a contract."

"I told them I couldn't get down there because I didn't have transport."

Luckily the difficulty was overcome by a friend giving him a lift, and he became a Sydney City player that

night. He was to be there for the next nine seasons.

When eventually he left it was the season before the great club shocked Australian soccer by folding.

"There were one or two years towards the end when it became apparent money was scarce and that something was wrong," he said. "It was time for me to move."

That move was to 'home'. "I lived just down the road from Apia Leichhardt, supported them as a boy and my family was connected with the club. When they said they wanted me I jumped at the chance."

ped at the chance."

The new job was a challenge. Coach Rale Rasic was desperately short of players and the club was battling, yet Pezzano still credits the ex-Socceroo boss with having the biggest single effect on his career.

"We were a bunch of larrikins at Sydney City," he said. "If there was a party on we'd be there, if there wasn't, we'd make one."

"Rale changed all that. He taught me to think about and respect the game, and that in turn made me a better player."

He remains bitter over his much-publicised departure from the club two years ago.

"My quarrel is entirely with the present coach, Manfred Schaefer. He has a style of coaching which I totally disagree with."

"It was him or me, and the club decided I should be the one to go."

"I'm with Wollongong now, and don't get me wrong — I have been treated really well there — but Apia was my club. The club I lived just round the corner from."

"I can't say I'm impressed with Apia since I left. They've got some talented players, but they're

performing like puppets and I think it surprised everyone they stayed in the league this season ahead of St George who had the better credentials."

"But that's behind me and now I'm concentrating on working for Wollongong. They're a very professional outfit — far better than most people give them credit for."

"If we get into the finals, and I think it's more a case of 'when' than 'if', then look out."

"I'm what you could call a spoilt footballer. I've played for good clubs and won a heap of medals."

"Now I want one more with Wollongong."

At 32, he is unsure how long he can go on. "Overseas goalkeepers keep playing until they're 40 or more, but in a part-time set-up it's far more difficult. We've got wives and families and live in a community that isn't so sympathetic to soccer as it could be."

"But as long as Sydney Olympic goalkeeper Gary Meier is still going, I'll be right in there. We've both been in the NSL from the start, we've been close friends for more than 10 years and he's a bit older than me — so he's my inspiration."

BY GREG BLAKE

VICTORIAN clubs face the prospect of having to miss opening round Diabetes Australia Dockerty Cup ties next weekend in the wake of a crackdown on clubs owing money to the Victorian Soccer Federation.

In the weeks leading up to the opening of the 1992 Victorian Dockerty Cup season operators some 26 clubs — including one Premier League team — were found to be in debt to the VSF by varying amounts in excess of \$1,000.

In an unprecedented crackdown on clubs owing money for more than 90 days, the VSF has been refusing to process registration renewals for clubs in debt.

In the wake of the VSF's policy, a number of Victorian clubs have made good the outstanding amounts, although others still face the prospect of missing the preliminary round cup action.

VSF executive director Terry Jones said the new policy was not taking a hard line for the sake of it.

"The move was born of necessity because the cash-flow is not there", he told ABSW.

The VSF made the move in response to some clubs which owe money yet continue to go out negotiating transfer fees and signing-on fees for prospective new players.

Jones said it was crucial for clubs to understand that their priority should be with attending to outstanding debts rather than taking on new ones.

"It is also important to assure the clubs that have paid on time that we would take action on those who are tardy", he explained.

In another move to access outstanding debts the VSF is considering moves to have all transfer fees paid through the federation.

Such a system would ensure debts to the VSF could be withdrawn from transfer payments before payment of a transfer fee was received by a club owing a substantial amount.

Opening draw for Vic season

BY GREG BLAKE

AN all-Italian derby between two old rivals and the first Premier League game by a home side from Geelong in three decades are the highlights of the Victorian Premier League opening round draw released by the Victorian Soccer Federation last week.

The first match of the 1992 season kicks-off on the last day of February as St Albans locks horns with 1991 champion Brunswick Juventus on the Saturday.

But opening round Sunday (March 1) promises plenty with the fierce northern suburbs rivals Thomastown and Fawkner

locking horns in what should be the biggest crowd of the day at Thomastown's Partridge Reserve.

The other drawcard appears to be the game in Geelong, where league newcomer North Geelong should be able to cash in on the curiosity of soccer starved locals for its game against Croydon City.

Knox City, also newly promoted for 1992, must travel to Bulleen whilst relegated NSL club Sunshine George Cross opens the season at home against Oakleigh.

In other Sunday first round games Green Gully hosts Morwell Falcons and Albion travels to Altona Gate.

In a bid to cash in on the popularity of mid-week fixtures, the full fifth round of the Premier League season will be played in a series of mid-week games

on successive Wednesdays in the last two weeks in March and the first week in April.

No matches have been scheduled for NSL grand final day on May 3.

The Premier League home and away season finishes on August 23, with the four weeks of finals scheduled for August 30 and September 6, 13 and 20.

The full first round Premier League draw is:
Sat Feb 29 - St Albans v B. Juventus
Sun Mar 1 - Green Gully v Morwell Falcons
Thomastown v Fawkner
S. George Cross v Oakleigh
North Geelong v Croydon
Altona Gate v Albion
Bulleen v Knox City

ABSW will feature the full fixture list for the Victorian Premier League 1992 season, as well as preliminary and first round Diabetes Australia Dockerty Cup games, in an upcoming edition.

New Juve home

BY GREG BLAKE

BRUNSWICK Juventus, Victorian football's nomadic former NSL giant, will play its 1992 Premier League games at the Western Oval, current home of AFL (Aussie rules) club Footscray.

The one-year agreement means Juve will move to its ninth home ground in recent history, having played home fixtures at Middle Park last year and Olympic Park, Gillon Oval, the Showgrounds, Elsternwick Junction, Junction Oval, Brunswick Street and Olympic Park No.2 over the past two decades.

Juve joins the Footscray Bulldogs as well as Australian Baseball League club, the Melbourne Bushrangers, at the western suburbs ground.

Footscray, in a bid to make its long-time Western Oval home viable, is also negotiating with rugby league officials in the hope of luring a league club to the ground in the future.

"We are very pleased to have Juventus as a co-tenant at the Western Oval", said a spokesman for the Footscray club.

"Like our football club, Juventus has a long and proud history and the soccer fans of the western suburbs should enjoy coming to our ground to see them play in 1992."

Although the decision to move to the ground is still to be formally approved by local council, Juve president Maria Carmignani told ABSW that she couldn't anticipate any problems.

"Footscray has been brilliant — very accommodating," she said.

"I think the facilities offered to us are fantastic and if our intention is to eventually go back into the NSL, which it is, then facility wise this move is crucial."

"I think we lost a lot of supporters because of the gypsy lifestyle they have had to endure."

"But if they have a home with these sort of facilities to enjoy on a regular basis I am sure those lost supporters will return."

Carmignani was unable to comment on matters regarding the club's long-awaited home ground development in Brunswick pending legal proceedings taken by the club against local council.

Former Juventus president Domenic Tenuta has severed his ties with the club after giving ten years service at administrative level.

Tenuta has left to devote more time to his blossoming business activities.

AROUND THE NATION

The memoirs of Gordon Nutt

BY WALTER PLESS

THERE must be many ex-footballers such as the retired goalkeeper portrayed by Brian Glanville in his excellent novel, "The Dying of the Light."

His character is aged, disillusioned, bitter and living on the memories of the past.

He has no skills or trade to enable him to pursue a life outside football. When his career is over, he degenerates.

He becomes a misfit in society and his inability to adapt leads ultimately to his demise.

Gordon Nutt, long-term resident of Sydney, and now living in Tasmania, is the antithesis of Glanville's sad, pathetic goalkeeper.

The 59-year-old former English professional soccer player — Coventry City, Cardiff City, Arsenal, Southend and PSV Eindhoven — typifies the traditional winger in British football, that is, until the position became redundant with the advent of Alf Ramsey's "wingsless wonders", the winners of the 1966 World Cup.

Small in stature, lean, nimble, chatty, and frequently wearing a cheeky smile, it is not difficult to envisage Nutt in his heyday, taking on burly fullbacks and beating them with ease and going on to either score goals or make them for teammates.

Indeed, the sprightly former pro, who counts the legendary Stanley Matthews as a friend, has numerous anecdotes from his playing days in the 1950s.

But, allied to these wonderful memories of a past that can never be relived, is an optimism, an acceptance of change, and an enjoyment of the present that stands in sharp contrast to the pessimism of Glanville's character.

Nutt does not dwell on the past, although he is more than happy to talk about it.

He does not regard the era in which he played as a golden age, preferring to believe that all eras have their highs and lows, and their stars.

And, even as a 16-year-old, Nutt thought of life after football and considered the alternatives. Towards

the end of his playing career, he began to make positive and concrete moves in other directions.

During his three seasons with Arsenal, in the mid-fifties, he met numerous entertainers and film stars who frequented Highbury, and when he called it quits at the age of 32, he had a readymade profession to go to, namely film production.

Nutt has lived in Tasmania for the past six months and adores the island.

Prior to that, he lived in Sydney for 27 years, having emigrated from Britain in 1964 after retiring from soccer.

He has worked in the film production industry all those years. Now, semi-retired, he is the only lighting man in Hobart with his own equipment and does freelance work for, among other things, the making of advertisements.

Born in Birmingham in 1932, Nutt came from a footballing family.

His grandfather had been a professional player and encouraged the youngster to follow in his footsteps.

Nutt played school-boy football in Birmingham and signed amateur forms for Arsenal when he was fourteen-and-a-half.

He was also being sought at this time by Birmingham City and Coventry City and, when he turned 15, opted to join the latter club because it was close to home and had an excellent youth programme.

Coventry was in the second division and in his two years at the club, Nutt progressed from the junior squad to the reserves and eventually to the first-team.

Be signed as a professional when he was 17 and, within six months, made his senior debut against Blackburn Rovers, scoring after only 35 seconds.

National Service disrupted his career, but did not destroy it.

Army regiments were more than happy to have professional sportsmen within their ranks and treated them generously.

Tommy Taylor, who was to die at Munich with many of his Manchester United teammates in 1958, Kenny Hodgkinson (West Bromwich Albion) and Johnny Groves (Luton Town) were some of



The great Stanley Matthews

Nutt's regimental pals.

Nutt represented the Army on a tour of Austria and, soon after, found himself in the first division, much to his own surprise, but also to his great satisfaction.

"When I came out of the Army, Coventry were in the third division and I knew first division clubs such as Spurs and Sheffield United wanted me," Nutt recalled.

"You know what you're like when you're 20. You think you own the world, and I felt I was first division material."

"Anyway, I went to Cardiff City for two seasons, then, out of the blue, after playing against Arsenal's reserves, I was signed by the Gunners."

"One Friday afternoon, I was told by the assistant manager that Tom Whittaker wan-

ted me and I was to jump on the train because I was playing for Arsenal the next day.

"It was as simple as that. The next day, I travelled to London and signed for Arsenal and the same day played against Sunderland."

Arsenal's next month was the home game against Aston Villa. It proved to be the Gunners' first home victory of the season and Nutt scored the winner.

Disaster followed. In his third game, against Everton at Goodison Park, Nutt broke his leg.

"It took me another six months to get back into top gear, but Arsenal then experienced some changes, including the death of manager Whittaker," Nutt explained.

"I was in and out of

the team and had my ups and downs over the next two years, and in 1957, Ron Greenwood (who was later to manage West Ham United and England) joined us and we started to buzz.

"I had a good run for two or three years, joined Southend, and even had a year in Holland with PSV Eindhoven."

"I had a delightful time in Holland, and we only missed out on the championship by one point, which was a bit sad."

"It was a lovely experience, but before I knew it, I was 32 and at the end of my career."

By this time, Nutt was well and truly involved in film production and he moved to Australia to pursue his second career.

His involvement with soccer continued.

He coached juniors, being the head coach at Forrestville from 1964 until 1970, when he had a one-year stint with first division side Manly.

His work, however, prevented him from devoting too much time to soccer.

Nutt regarded Manchester United of the "Busby Babes" era as the toughest team he has played against. He recalls one meeting at Highbury in which United led 3-0 at the break, only to be pegged back to 3-3, before finally overwhelming the Gunners 5-3.

He still maintains contact with Arsenal and often sends Australian youngsters to the club with a note telling the staff at Highbury to look after them.

"I hope I'll be able to continue to do that now that I'm in Tasmania," he says.

Stanley Matthews was his hero, but he admired many other of his contemporaries, including Tom Finney, Jimmy Greaves, Tommy Harmer and Danny Blanchflower.

Nutt played during the days of the maximum wage — it was reputed that the members of the band that played at the FA Cup Final at Wembley in those days earned more than the players — but he is not bitter about it.

"A soccer player is an entertainer — we played before crowds of 60 and 70 thousand — and a player's career is relatively short, so our 25 pounds a week was a paltry sum compared to the 1500 pounds a week some of the entertainers just down the road from Highbury earned," he says.

"They would often come to Highbury to watch us play and they couldn't understand it, either."

"Good players are now, I hope, getting their just rewards. I hope they use it sensibly."

"At least they have an opportunity to make some money for their families and for their future because for many there's not much afterwards, after having spent 15 years, or 20 if you're lucky, in the game."

Nutt believes soccer opened many doors for him in later life, and in his second career in the film industry, so he does not look back with envy at the ear-

ning power of some of today's stars.

He does not believe the game or the players of today are more cynical than in the past. Television has, rather, given us a different perspective.

"Cameras reveal so much more now and perhaps it is the zoom lens that created this image," he explains.

"I mean, in my day, if you were tripped or badly fouled you certainly gave the offender a mouthful, but it wasn't heard or even noticed."

Now, immediately there's an incident, the cameras zoom in on it and players are seen mouthing obscenities, or spitting or jostling.

"I think today's players are probably still the same sort of blokes as the players of my day."

"They've worked hard, they've made the grade, they're trying to stay in one piece, and they get a bit more money, but I think once they tread on that field, they don't think of how much bonus they're going to make."

"That's the last thing on their minds and I still think they're more interested in having a good game."

Nutt's continued enthusiasm for the game is illustrated by his acceptance of the position of coaching director of Tasmanian Soccer Schools, which will conduct its first clinics in early February.

He genuinely believes he can put something back into the game that has given him so much.

Although he is reluctant to commit himself to more than his TSS responsibilities — he does not want to coach a club, for example — he is willing to give advice when it is asked for and to work in tandem with State coaching director, Les Bee, and the Tasmanian Soccer Federation, to promote and develop the game.

"My work limits my availability and I don't want to tie myself down, but if anyone would like me to come and give a talk I'd love to because I think I can recreate the atmosphere and the aura that surrounded Arsenal and the football of my era," Nutt said.

It seems an offer too good to refuse because Tasmania is not often a stopping point for ex-footballers who have achieved what Gordon Nutt has.



Iraq expelled!

IRAQ have been expelled from all sporting competitions organised by the Gulf Cooperation Council.

But the Gulf Cup football tournament, which was in danger of disappearing, will continue, the six-member Council decided last week.

Sports Ministers of the remaining six Gulf States, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman, voted to kick the Iraqis out because of the "hostile activities of the regime which threaten peace and stability in the region."

Relations between the Council and Baghdad had been frozen since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990.

The 11th Gulf Cup will go ahead in Qatar in October.

Several sporting officials in the Gulf wanted the Cup scrapped after the last tournament in Kuwait in 1990, when Saudi Arabia withdrew in protest at the Kuwaitis' reference to a battle between the two nations in publicity for the Cup. Iraq also failed to turn up and Oman threatened to stage a boycott.

The Ministers also approved the organisation of the first Gulf Olympiad in September 1993 in Saudi Arabia.

Aurelio slays them

BY LOU GAUTIER

WHILE brother Tony was perhaps cementing a starting line-up in the Australian 'A' team on top of his berth in the Olympic national side, Aurelio Vidmar continued to wow them in Belgium.

The older Vidmar scored the winning goal in Kortrijk's crucial 2-1 home win over fellow First Division strugglers Alost.

Aurelio netted in the 58th minute after Krohn had equalised in the 50th for the visitors.

The two points enabled Kortrijk to open up a six-point cushion on wooden spooners Alost and a two-point leader over second-last placed Charleroi.

Eddie Krncevic wasn't so successful, though.

His FC Liege, after drawing 2-2 with Cercle Brugge, a former club of Eddie's, were beaten 1-0 by crosstown rivals Standard.

Jason Polak is still finding it tough to get a start with struggling De Graafschap in Holland, but Graham Arnold, although he has yet to score after the winter break in Holland, is still in good form for Roda JC, who held in-form Feyenoord to a scoreless draw.

In Portugal, Vlado Bozinoski continues to perform strongly for his middle-of-the-table Beira Mar, while in Greece John Anastasiadis scored a spectacular goal for PAOK against Olympiakos.

And Lou Hristodoulou continues to shade fellow Aussie Chris Kalantzis at Panathinaikos so far this season, suggesting that Eddie Thomson may well be advised to have a look at him when it's time to select our team for the World Cup qualifiers.

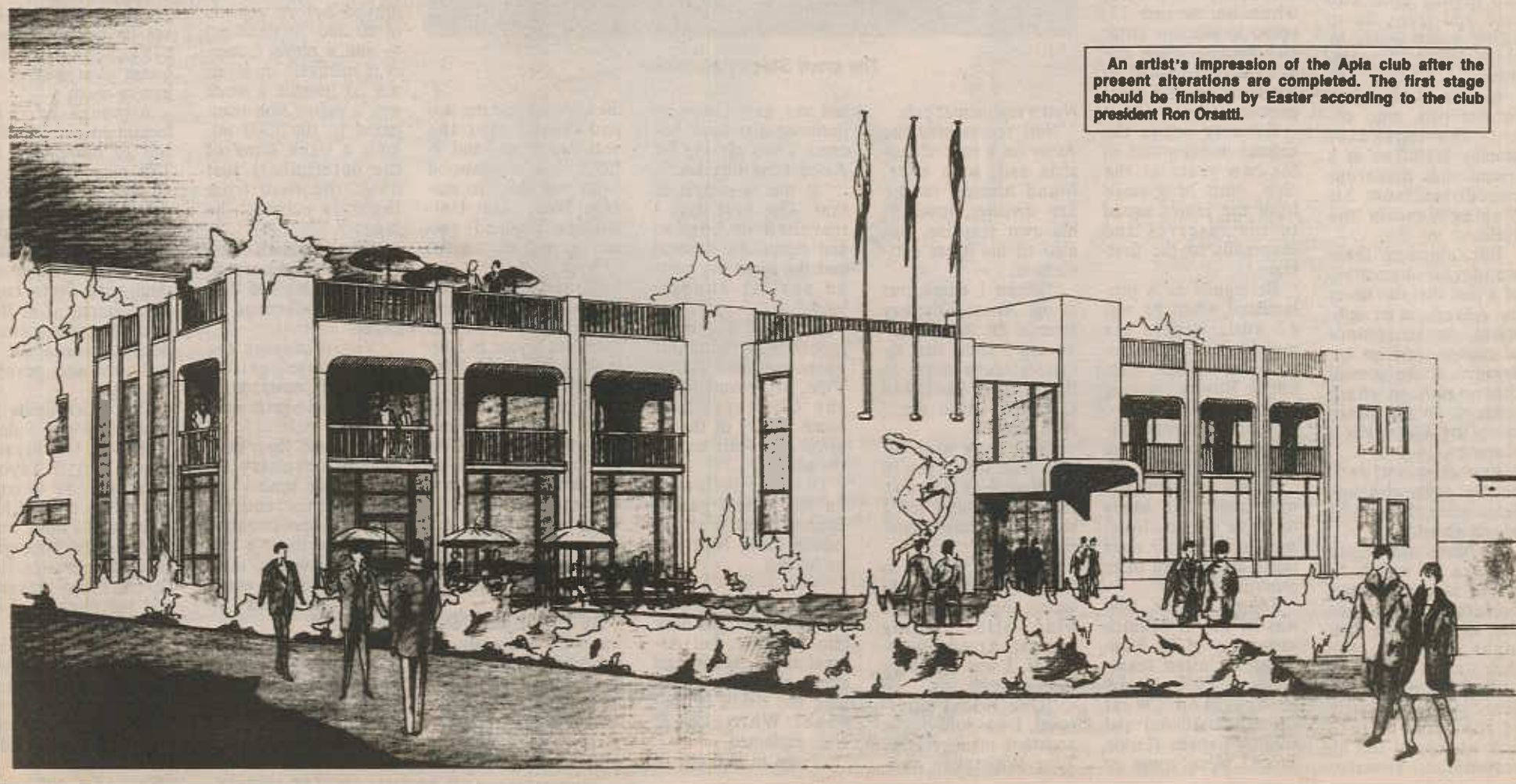
Robbie Slater, of course, is another expatriate who must come under close scrutiny for his brilliant form with Lens.

Lens, after thrashing Saint Etienne 4-0 at St Etienne — with Slater setting up the goal scored by Israeli international Shalom Tikvah — drew 0-0 with Rennes at home and occupy ninth place in the 20-team First Division field after 26 rounds.



Socceroo striker Graham Arnold is performing well in Holland with Roda JC and will be welcomed back into the Socceroo fold with open arms.

The new look Apia club takes shape



An artist's impression of the Apia club after the present alterations are completed. The first stage should be finished by Easter according to the club president Ron Orsatti.



Latest overseas results & tables



ITALY

Ascoli 1 Atalanta 0, Bari 1 Parma 1, Cagliari 1 AC Milan 4, Genoa 3 Fiorentina 2, Internazionale 0 AS Roma 0, Juventus 4 Foggia 1, Lazio 2 Torino 1, Napoli 3 Cremonese 0, Verona 0 Sampdoria 0.

STANDINGS

AC Milan	33
Juventus	28
Napoli	26
Lazio	22
Parma	22
Internazionale	22
Torino	21
Sampdoria	20
Atalanta	20
AS Roma	20
Genoa	19
Foggia	18
Florentina	17
Verona	14
Cagliari	12
Bari	10
Cremonese	10
Ascoli	8

AC Milan's Dutch striker Marco Van Basten and Italian international Roberto Baggio of Juventus both scored inspirational hat-tricks to lead their sides to identical 4-1 wins on Sunday.

Just one week away from their potentially decisive clash at the San Siro in Milan, the Italian League's top two teams were in impressive form.

Milan had to come back from 1-0 down away to Cagliari after midfielder Pierpaolo Bisoli had surprised the unbeaten league leaders with a sixth minute goal.

Lowly Cagliari hung on to lead at halftime but Van Basten turned the game around with a devastating hat-trick in an 18 minute spell during the second half to maintain Milan's five point lead.

Having tapped in a 55th minute Roberto Donadoni free kick, Van Basten scored his second goal five minutes later and the third from the penalty spot in the 73rd minute.

Two of Baggio's goals in Juventus's home game against Foggias came from the penalty spot — the first after just three minutes.

He put them 2-0 up with his second spot kick in the 52nd minute and completed his hat-trick a minute later with a spectacular long-range effort.

Foggia staged a brief revival with a head goal from Romanian defender Dan Luigi Casiraghi underlined his team's supremacy with a fourth goal in injury time.

RIVAL Italian soccer fans from Cagliari and AC Milan brawled before, during, and after Italian's first-division match in Cagliari, leaving more than 20 people injured including police.

After several pre-match scuffles an a rain of cans during play from the Milan fans, violence erupted again as sellout crowd of 42,000 filed out of Cagliari's Sant'Elia stadium. An Italian television reporter's car was set on fire in the parking lot.

Fans also brawled in Milan during the Internazionale-AS Roma game. Two fans were treated for injuries.

ENGLAND

Aston Villa 0 Everton 0.

ASTON VILLA and Everton have shared the points in a division one soccer game which ended as a goalless tie, although the home team netted twice in the first half.

Dwight Yorke bundled the ball over the line and then a Gary Parker pass split the defence and found Tony Daley who was left with the easy task of beating goalkeeper Neville Southall.

But both times referee Philip Don ruled the scorer offside.

He denied them again late in the second half by turning down Aston Villa's claims for a penalty when substitute Ian Olney appeared to be tripped by Everton's Gary Ablett.

The result leaves both teams in the middle of the English division one.



NICOLA BERTI

HOLLAND

Ajax Amsterdam 0 FC Groningen 0, FC Den Haag 0 RKC Waalwijk 0, SVV/Dordrecht '90 0 Feyenoord Rotterdam 1, Vitesse Arnhem 0 FC Volendam 0, Sparta Rotterdam 1 De Graafschap Doetinchem 1, Willem II Tilburg 5 Fortuna Sittard 0, PSV Eindhoven 0 Roda JC Kerkrade 0.

STANDINGS

PSV Eindhoven	37
Feyenoord Rotterdam	37
Ajax Amsterdam	33
Vitesse Arnhem	31
FC Twente Enschede	26

REP OF IRELAND

Bray Wanderers 0 Athlone Town 1, Derry City 0 Cork City 1, Galway United 2 Shamrock Rovers 2, St Patrick's Athletic 2 Drogheda United 1.

STANDINGS

Shelbourne	36
Derry	35
Cork	31
Dundalk	30
Bohemians	29
Shamrock Rovers	26

PORTUGAL

Boavista 3 Uniao Madeira 0, Gil Vicente 2 Beira Mar 0, Gulmaras 1 Benfica 3, Torreense 0 Porto 0, Pacos Ferreira 1 Farense 0, Salgueiros 1 Penafiel 1.

STANDINGS

Porto	31
Benfica	29
Sporting	26
Boavista	26
Gulmaras	23

GREECE

Corinthos 0 Panathinaikos 2, AEK 1 Olympiakos 1, Athinaikos 2 Serres 0, Aris 1 Paok 1, Doxa 3 Larissa 1, Ethnikos 2 Apollon 1, Panionios 2 Iraklis 2, OFI 1 Panahalki 1, Pierikos 1 Xanthi 0.

STANDINGS

AEK	27
Olympiakos	24
Panathinaikos	24
PAOK	23
Apollon	22
Aris	21

FRANCE

Nimes 1 Nancy 2, Sochaux 2 Lille 1, Caen 0 Montpellier 0, Lens 0 Auxerre 0, Metz 1 Le Havre 1, Paris St Germain 3, Lyon 0, Rennes 0 Cannes 0, Toulon 1 Monaco 1, Toulouse 0 Marseille 2.

STANDINGS

Marseille	40
Monaco	36
Paris St Germain	33
Caen	33
Auxerre	32
Montpellier	32
Le Havre	32
Nantes	29
Lens	28
Metz	28
St Etienne	26
Lille	25
Toulon	25
Toulouse	24
Lyon	24
Nimes	22
Cannes	20
Rennes	20
Sochaux	18
Nancy	13

SPAIN

Sevilla 1 Athletic Bilbao 2, Sporting Gijon 1 Real Valladolid 0, Real Madrid 1 Cadiz 1, Logrones 2 Tenerife 0, Deportivo Coruna 0 Valencia 1, Albacete 1 Osasuna 0, Real Mallorca 2 Real Oviedo 0, Espanol 1 Real Zaragoza 0, Real Burgos 1 Atletico Madrid 1, Real Sociedad 2 Barcelona 1.

STANDINGS

Real Madrid	32
Barcelona	28
Valencia	27
Real Zaragoza	26
Albacete	25
Atletico Madrid	24
Sporting Gijon	24

BELGIUM

Mechelen 0 Waregem 0, Ghent 0 Lokeren 0, Kortrijk 0 Club Brugge 3, Standard Liege 4 Ekeren 1, Cercle Brugge 2 Beveren 2, Genk 0 Aalst 0, Anderlecht 0 Lierse 0.

STANDINGS

Anderlecht	32
Standard Liege	30
Mechelen	29
Club Brugge	29
Antwerp	24
Ghent	24
Cercle Brugge	24

OLYMPIC GAMES QUALIFIER

Brazil beat Peru 2-1 (half-half) in a South American Group A Olympic soccer qualifier on Sunday.

SOUTH AMERICA

with
Mario Etchart

Argies' second phase

ARGENTINA's clubs are shaping up for the second phase of their competition, some with new signings, others with new coaches.

The winner of the first phase, River Plate, signed ex-Argentinos Juniors defender Fernando Caceres and are still looking for a midfielder to replace Juan Jose Borrelli, now with Greek club Panathinaikos.

Coach Daniel Passarella will continue at the helm denying rumours of a possible move to a top Italian club.

Arch-rival, Boca Juniors reached an agreement with Uruguayan coach Oscar Tavarez, who will continue for another season.

Boca Juniors are expected to sign strikers Alberto Marcico and Sergio Saturno.

The coaches, new signings and players transferred by their clubs are the following:

ARGENTINOS JUNIORS

Coach: Jose Yudica
Players transferred: Fernando Caceres to River Plate.

HURACAN

Coach: Alberto Fanesi replaces Carlos Alberto Babington.

GIMNASIA Y ESGRIMA

Coach: Gregorio Perez

INDEPENDIENTE

Coach: Ricardo Bohchini

Players transferred: Luis Artime to Belgrano; Pedro Monzon to Barcelona of Ecuador and Diego Aguirre.

Possible signings: Ramon Hicks (Cerro Porteno, Paraguay), Alejandro Alfaro Moreno (Espanol of Barcelona) or Jose Blanchart (Las Palmas, Spain).

MANDIYU

Coach: Oscar Lopez
New signings: Hector Moran from Nacional of Uruguay.

NEWELL'S OLD BOYS

Coach: Marcelo Bielsa

PLATENSE

Coach: Jorge Pedro Marchetta

QUILMES

Coach: Carlos Alberto Trullet replaces Jose Ramos Delgado

RACING CLUB

Coach: Osvaldo Sosa

Players transferred: Fabian Suescun to Sporting Cristal of Peru.

Possible signings: Paraguayan striker Carlos Luis Torres, 23, from Olimpia or ex-Uruguayan international Jorge Da Silva.

ROSARIO CENTRAL

Coach: Eduardo Miguel Solari replaces Angel Tulio Zof

Players transferred: Ariel Santoro and Rodolfo Garcia to Deportivo Cali of Colombia.

Possible signings: Defender Edgardo Bauza and one striker from Miguel Sanabria (Olimpia, Paraguay), Feliz Torres (Mandiyu) and Dante Hernandez (Union).

SAN LORENZO

Coach: Fernando Jose Arean

New signings: Nestor Raul Gorosito from Tirol of Austria.

TALLERES

Coach: Jose Omar Pastoriza replaces Eduardo Lujan Manera.

Player retired: Ex-Argentine international Marcelo Trobbiani.

UNION

Coach: To be named

Possible signings: Defender Mario Lucca (Velez Sarsfield), Sergio Batista, Carlos Tapia and Roque Alfaro.

VELEZ SARSFIELD

Coach: Eduardo Lujan Manera replaces Hector Bentron.

New signings: Goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert (Zaragoza, Spain) and Luis Trotta (Estudiantes).

BELGRANO

Coach: Carlos Biasutto

New players: Alejandro Cano, 24, striker from Sol de America of Paraguay and Luis Artime from Independiente.

DEPORTIVO ESPANOL

Coach: Oscar Caballero

Players transferred: Alejandro Kenig (striker) to Universidad Catolica of Chile.

ESTUDIANTES DE LA PLATA

Coach: Humberto Zuccarelli

Players transferred: Roberto Trotta to Velez Sarsfield.

FERRO CARRIL OESTE

Coach: Carlos Timoteo Griguol



Boca Juniors' Claudio Marangoni in action



Marcato of Ascoli jumps over Roma's Italian international striker Rizzitelli in the course of their teams' recent 1-1 draw.

EURO-92

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

"SMALL is beautiful" — it's on this theme that the Swedish organisers are preparing for the European Championship finals in June.

Certainly Euro '92 promises to be a cosy affair.

Only one of the four stadiums where the tournament will be staged has a capacity of more than 30,000, while the smallest, in Norrköping, holds a little less than 19,000.

Two of the eight teams competing could start making hotel and travel arrangements even before the draw in Gothenburg on January 17. Sweden, the hosts, will play all their group games at Rasunda Stadium in the Stockholm suburb of Solna. Holland, as reigning European champions, will be based in Gothenburg for the first stage of the tournament.

Travel arrangements for the other six nations — England, France, Germany, Scotland, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia — will be somewhat more complicated. Those drawn in Sweden's group will play one game in Stockholm and the other two in Malmö in the south, while Holland's opponents will play once in Gothenburg and twice in Norrköping, south of Stockholm.

The tournament opens in Stockholm on June 10 with Sweden's first game, and the last of the 12 group games will be in Norrköping and Gothenburg on June 22, with the final, four days later, also at Gothenburg's Ullevi Stadium.

Rasunda, where AIK of Stockholm play their home games, had, until recently, a capacity of over 40,000.

But it's being made all-seater in time for Euro '92, which will reduce the capacity to just under 28,000.

The scene of the 1958 World Cup final, where the 17-year-old Pele helped Brazil defeat Sweden 5-2, Rasunda is a compact English-style stadium where the crowd is close to the action on all four sides of the ground — a ground dominated by the glass tower in one corner.

Separated

Some 36,000 will be able to watch Holland's opening game at Ullevi, a ground more in the European tradition with its track separating the pitch from the stands. It's a ground with fond memories for a number of Scots — for it's where Aberdeen won the 1983 Cup-Winners' Cup by beating Real Madrid.

Ullevi, the home of a number of clubs, including Sweden's reigning champions, IFK Gothenburg, also hosted the 1990 Cup-Winners' Cup final, when Sampdoria beat Anderlecht.



Malmö, a short ferry-ride across the Öresund from Copenhagen, boasts Sweden's only fully professional football club, Malmö FF.

Malmö Stadium is on similar lines to Ullevi, with its island of green separated from the stands by a bright red running track. The 26,800 will be able to watch group games there.

Norrköping's Idrottsparken would not look out of place in the English Third Division. When reconstruction work there is complete, the capacity will have been reduced to 18,770.

A small stadium in a small town, which will host games between the giants of European football — Yugoslavia and England.

Sune Sandström, in charge of organising the policing of Euro '92, admits there could well be more fans than tickets, and says the police are making arrangements to deal with the overflow.

"We're expecting a lot of Germans, for instance, because they are so close to Sweden. So we're looking into the

possibility of setting up video screens so people will be able to watch the games outside the arenas," he said.

Sandström is himself a football fan and is pleased the likes of England, Holland and Germany have qualified, despite the crowd control problems that may entail.

Hooliganism is a minor problem in Sweden itself, although there was trouble after derby games in Stockholm last season.

"A problem we may have to face is Swedish trouble-makers trying to fight visiting supporters," said Sandström.

"We have to count on German, Dutch and English trouble-makers as well. But I'm sure our preparations in co-operation with foreign police forces will help."

Hosting the championship has enabled Sweden to appear in the final stages for the first time ever.

They'll be under some pressure to do well, not only because they'll be at home, but also because of the disappointment of the World Cup in Italy.



DARKO PANCEV: like all Macedonian sportsmen, he'll soon have to decide whether he continues playing for Yugoslavia. The government of the Macedonian Republic has ordered its citizens to pull out of Yugoslav national teams.

No Cup switch — FIFA

SPECULATION that FIFA had contingency plans to move the 1994 World Cup finals from the United States to Argentina has been dismissed by the game's big brass.



"I heard this rumour over a year ago. "It looks like a re-hash with a new twist," said US Soccer Federation president Alan Rothenberg.

FIFA spokesman Guido Tognoni said: "Utter rubbish, not worthy of comment,"

when asked about a newspaper report that they could move the finals to South America because they were concerned at the lack of public interest in the US.

"It makes sense that we extend the original deadline of March 31 for the conclusion of

the television negotiations to a time when the match schedule for the final rounds has been finalised as they are related.

"The schedule will be ready well ahead of the FIFA congress in Zurich on July 2-3," he said.

The deadline for bids for the US television rights of the 1994 World Cup are being extended until the match schedule is known, Rothenberg said.

The major US networks — ABC, CBS, NBC and Turner Broadcasting — who had shown scant interest, are all now in the running for the rights,

although their initial lack of interest led to the European Broadcasting Union stepping in as host broadcaster to provide the TV signal for World-wide distribution.



This is the newly unveiled logo of the mascot for USA '94.

PIONTEK PREDICTS TURKISH DELIGHT

GERMAN-born coach Sepp Piontek, the man who was in charge of Denmark when they enchanted world football in the 1980s, is now in Turkey.

His task with the Turkish national team is a daunting one.

Results have not been what the hard-to-please Turkish fans expected from a coach of Piontek's reputation.

But the pipe-smoking German believes Turkey have turned the corner and will be a force to be reckoned with for the 1994 World Cup qualifiers.

"When I first went to Turkey they were so unrealistic," he said.

"They thought we would immediately win matches 3-0 against strong sides like England.

"They are beginning to learn."

Lazy

So is 51-year-old Piontek, who is unlikely to make many more outrageous promises like vowing to swim the Bosphorus if Turkey won at Wembley.

"That was a bit close for comfort," he joked.

He is genuinely delighted that his methods are finally succeeding.

"Of course, results are important. But in the long term it is how well you are playing that matters, because the results come from that.

"In the past Turkish players have been a bit



SEPP PIONTEK

lazy. They do well in one game, but think they don't need to bother next time. I can see more consistency coming. And every First Division team now plays on grass pitches, that helps.

"All Turkey need now is a top-class striker and they can have some genuine ambition. If only we had Gary Lineker or Preben Elkjaer. It was the same when we played in Poland earlier this year.

"We dominated the game for 75 minutes but couldn't score, then lost to a couple of late goals."

Talk of Elkjaer inevitably brings the conversation round to the great Danish side Piontek built in the mid-1980s, who excited so many people with dashing style and no fear of failure.

Piontek says: "Elkjaer was one of the two best players I worked with.

"He could change a game by himself, so strong and quick and so good at scoring. The other was Morten Olsen, who led the team on the pitch, and played as a real libero.

"There were some wonderful matches, too. The 6-1 defeat of Uruguay in the 1986 World Cup finals was a fantasy match.

"But perhaps the greatest occasion was in the summer of 1985

when Denmark beat the Soviet Union 4-2 in Copenhagen. It was a national holiday, a bright sunny day, a full crowd of 'Rølgangs', and two teams who tried to score more goals than the other side.

"Elkjaer scored twice and the Soviets came back with a goal. Then young Michael Laudrup scored, running from inside his own half. We finished 4-2 winners and qualified for the World Cup."

TOTTERING AUSTRIANS

Austrian football is still tottering on unsteady foundations and frantically trying to regain balance.

As one eminent expert put it: "We are currently taking one step forward and two back."

Hardly had the National League decided to reduce the number of clubs in the top division, than they agreed to increase the complement!

A decision was taken to lower the number of teams from 12 to 10, as from next season, in the hope that a smaller elite would help to raise standards.

Then the new ruling was overturned, so 1992-93 will again feature 12 clubs, and the proposed reduction will take place a year later.

Diplomatic

Piontek is too diplomatic to talk about the problems facing his successor in that job, Richard Møller Nielsen.

But his honesty allows him to make one point: "Michael Laudrup, what a gifted player. You will never see a better technique.

"He can do anything with a ball. He's like a child playing. But you have to wonder whether he has the heart for the job.

"Sometimes you have to be tough in football as well as beautiful."

Piontek is pleased by the emergence of so many coaches and managers from that generation of dynamite Danes.

Morten Olsen led Brøndby to the UEFA Cup semi-final last season, Søren Lerby has taken over at Bayern Munich and Frank Arnesen is assistant to Bobby Robson at PSV Eindhoven.

"It makes me very proud to see them all doing so well," he says.

— from WORLD SOCCER

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

An all-seater stadium must be high on the list of Irish resolutions.

FIFA's ruling that all World Cup qualifying games must be played in all-seater stadia is bad news for the FAI.

Lansdowne, don't have any immediate plans to make the stadium all-seater.

The FAI's plans to erect temporary stands on the terraces at Lansdowne may not be approved by FIFA.

At present all of the Republic's home games are sold out and if the new rule is implemented in full, there are going to be thousands of disappointed fans in Ireland.

One of the most immediate effects of the 1994 World Cup draw is that the proposed friendly against Denmark in Dublin on February 19 has been cancelled.

And with the qualifying rounds starting in April/May, David O'Leary may have to postpone plans for his testimonial which was pencilled in for May 20.

The seven countries in Group 3 met in Copenhagen on January 20 to arrange fixtures for what will be a marathon campaign.



Ouch! It's crunch time as Torino's Benedetti crashed non too subtly into the back of Genoa's Czech international, Tomas Skuhravy in Genoa's recent 1-0 Italian Serie 'A' win.

Sixteen teams set for Euro-96 finals

UEFA have confirmed they might expand the next European Championship finals from eight to 16 teams and possibly divide the tournament between two countries.

Lennart Johansson, president of European soccer's governing body, UEFA, said all its members had been asked for their reaction to doubling the size of the tournament and about their ability to stage a large competition.

UEFA also said all players in this year's finals in Sweden would have numbers on both the front and back of their shirts and their names on the back for easier identification by referees, media and spectators.

The decision on whether to remain with eight teams or ex-

pand the finals was expected to be made in March, possibly at the same time as the 1996 host nation was selected, he said.

Austria, England, Greece, the Netherlands and Portugal have all bid to stage the next tournament and Johansson said a choice would be made either in March or May at the latest.

"In view of the increasing number of nations in Europe, a decision was taken to look at changing the format in future," Johansson said.

"It was recommended the tournament be increased to 16 with

eight teams playing in two countries or one hosting all 16."

The World Cup, soccer's largest championship, has 24 teams competing in the finals.

Johansson said the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia would be invited to play in the qualifying series for the 1996 championship, together with Israel, and with the recent addition of the Faroe Islands and San Marino he expected 39 teams to take part.

UEFA turned down a request by world champions Germany not to carry over cautions from the qualifying stages into the finals in June.

UEFA general secretary Gerhard Aigner said they saw no reason to change the ruling from previous tournaments and any players with a single yellow card would face suspension for a game if cautioned during the finals.

Denmark to the rescue

Denmark are leading the way to helping Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia make up for their 50-year absence from the international map.

Th DBU has launched a campaign to collect used kit from their own clubs and ship it to the Baltic states.

The campaign began last month and runs through to February.

DBU secretary Jim Stjerne Hansen says: "Basically, they have no real equipment at all.

"When I visited Lithuania recently I was invited to play in an indoor match and my hosts were proud to lend me a pair of sneakers — the sort I used when I was in the army years ago.

"It was obvious that a lot of people had been playing in those shoes before me.

"Yet they have nothing else. They need help. We can give it."



Jubilant members of Red Star Belgrade carry the Yugoslav flag after winning the 1991 Toyota Cup in Tokyo. Red Star's quest to retain their European title resumes on March 4.

Around the globe

Compiled by LOU GAUTIER



- Two of South Africa's best players are training with Juventus in Turin. They are the champion Kaizer Chiefs pair of Fani Madida and Howard Freese. Madida was top scorer in the South African National League with 28 goals.
- Argentine junior Juan Esnaider has flopped in Spain and Real Madrid, who paid \$2 million for him eight months ago, have sent him back to Independiente Buenos Aires. Esnaider only appeared six times in the reserve team after a mediocre performance in the 1991 Youth World Championship in Portugal where he was sent off!
- Veteran midfielder Marcelo Trobbiani has retired. The 37-year-old Argentinian, a member of the 1986 World Cup-winning squad, had been playing for Talleres Cordoba for many years.
- Luis Gabelo Conejo, the brilliant Costa Rican goalkeeper at Italia '90, is in the last season of his contract with Spanish First Division side Albacete. He will actually be hanging up his gloves come July.
- The Brazilian newspaper "O Globo" voted FC Sao Paulo midfielder Rai the 1991 Brazilian Footballer of the Year. He tallied the most votes in a poll conducted amongst Brazil's top coaches. Sao Paulo supremo Tele Santana is the Coach of the Year and Sao Paulo also took out the Under 21 Player of the Year award with Elivelton.
- In Ecuador, Barcelona Guayaquil midfielder Jose Gavica is the Player of the Year. He collected his prize, "The Golden Condor", from Ecuador's best known sporting identity, tennis star Andres Gomez.
- Envigao, a club from Medellin, are the winners of the first-ever Colombian Second Division competition, thus earning the right to play in First Division next season.
- Sigma Olomouc striker Pavel Hapal is being chased by Hamburg... not surprising, really, because it was the Czechoslovakian international, seen in Australia last year, who scored three of the six goals in his side's tie against the German club last year in the UEFA Cup.
- The big rumour in Holland is that Brazilian striker Romario is on the verge of returning home to rejoin his old club, Vasco de Gama. Zambian ace Bwalya Kalusha is playing so well that PSV Eindhoven would not be opposed to the transfer — provided the price is right.
- FOTBAL PLUS, the Romanian soccer publication, has selected the following 1991 World Team of the Year: Goycochea (Argentina) and Illgner (Germany), Reuter (Germany), Belodedic (Yugoslavia), Boli (France), Brehme (Germany), Waddle (England), Prosinecki (Yugoslavia), Matthaus (Germany), Savicevic (Yugoslavia), Papin (France), Lineker (England).
- Although not recognised by UEFA or FIFA, the Georgian competition has produced its first "autumn champion". Leader at the half-way mark of a 12-club league was Iberia (ex-Dynamo Tbilisi in the Soviet league). The former Soviet republic's new league is said to be thriving despite the internal strife now plaguing the region.
- Polish striker Jan Urban, one of the most prolific scorers in Spanish Division One, has re-signed for his club Osasuna until 1995. He has been at Pamplona since 1989.

KOREAN AGAIN TOPS ASIAN POLL

KIM Joo-Sung, the South Korean striker, is Asian Footballer of the Year for the third year running.



Kim, who plays for Pusan side Daewoo Royals, beat team-mate Chung Yong-Hwan to the title by three votes in a poll organised by the International Federation of Football History and Statistics, whose Australian representative is AAP's Ted Simmons.

WORLD-WIDE HAPPENINGS

■ The Italian Footballers' Union is determined to fight the League's plans to allow a fourth foreign player per team next season.

Their lawyer Sergio Campana claims there is no agreement between European football's ruling body, UEFA, and the European Community, whose plans for a single market involve the free circulation of workers.

★★★

■ Spanish coach Luis Suarez has signed a three-year contract

with Inter Milan, but the club president emphasises that Suarez's future role with the team will be decided on the basis of the results of the remaining Italian league matches.

President Ernesto Pellegrini says Suarez will be Inter's coach through the end of this season.

"He will be a team member for three years.

"Results will indicate at the end of the season if he will continue as a coach or with another role,"

Pellegrini said.

★★★

■ Bayern Munich striker Brian Laudrup has settled his differences with Danish coach Richard Moller Nielsen and is ending his self-imposed 15-month exile from the national squad.

Laudrup has expressed doubts about Nielsen's competence, but now says: "I have every confidence in him".

It is not shared by his brother Michael (Barcelona) who is still staying out.

Germany tipped to win Euro title

THE latest London bookmakers odds had Germany as 9-4 favourites with France close behind on 9-2 after the draw for this year's European Championship was announced.

England and the Netherlands were rated joint third on 11-2.

"The draw could

have been much worse.

"We can live with it.

"Without wanting to be arrogant, our team has a very good chance of reaching the semi-finals," said coach Berti Vogts.

Former team chief Franz Beckenbauer, who led Germany to triumph in Italy in 1990, said: "It looks like a very balanced competition.

"Holland and Germany are favourites in group two, but the CIS can surprise and you never know with Scotland."

Vogts was worried about the CIS players: "One problem will be getting a close look at the team," he said.

If the former Soviet Union can overcome the political turmoil at home and reproduce the form that saw them qualify ahead of a lacklustre Italy, neither the Dutch nor the Germans can be certain of reaching the semi-finals.

The top two teams in each group qualify for the semifinals with the winners playing the second-placed team in the other.

Former English World Cup-winning player Bobby Charlton, like Beckenbauer a guest at the draw, was confident.

"I am very pleased that England will not be playing Germany, the Netherlands or Scotland," he said.

"France, England and Yugoslavia are equally strong, perhaps with France slight favourites," he said.

Swedish coach Tommy Svensson was delighted that the draw pitted them against France in the opening game of the finals on June 10 in Stockholm.

"What an opening game for Swedish soccer fans.

"That will be really something," he said.

France, who qualified with maximum points, have not lost for almost three years and have won 16 of their last 18 games.

And a reminder of the draw:



FRANZ BECKENBAUER

Group one

- June 10 — Sweden v France (in Stockholm)
- June 11 — Yugoslavia v England (Malmo)
- June 14 — Sweden v Yugoslavia (Stockholm), France v England (Malmo)
- June 17 — Sweden v England (Stockholm), France v Yugoslavia (Malmo)



Group two

- June 12 — Netherlands v Scotland (Gothenburg), CIS v Germany (Norrkoping)
- June 15 — Netherlands v CIS (Gothenburg), Scotland v Germany (Norrkoping)
- June 18 — Netherlands v Germany (Gothenburg), Scotland v CIS (Norrkoping)

Semifinals

- June 21 — Winner group one v Runner-up group two (Stockholm)
- June 22 — Winner group two v Runner-up group one (Gothenburg)

Final

- June 26 — (Gothenburg)
- ★ All matches will be shown live on SBS-TV





EDITED BY TOM ANDERSON

BILLY CASHES IN FOR SCOTLAND

GOALKEEPER Billy Thomson turned his back on a money-spinning Tannadice testimonial in a bid to recapture his Scotland place.

The seven-times capped Tommo spent two seasons languishing in the Dundee United reserve side before Motherwell stepped in with a £50,000 bid last July.

And even though he could have picked up around £80,000 from his testimonial, he knew he had to leave.

"I had two years of my Tannadice contract to go," the 33-year-old admits. "But in the previous two seasons I'd played only a dozen first-team games.

SECURITY

"So although it was in my interests to move on, the United contract I'd signed guaranteed me a testimonial.

"I had to strike a balance between wanting first-team football and providing financial security for my family."

Tommo admits Motherwell offered him a healthy signing-on fee — believed to be around £25,000.

"I can't deny that there was a fair amount of cash involved," he says.

"But Motherwell appreciated my predicament and there were no snags about the financial side.

"When they declared an interest, it made sense that I be compensated at least in part for missing out on a United testimonial.

"The irony was, a spot in a Premier League side was the last thing I expected.

"When United agreed to let me go I looked around the Premier League and just couldn't see a first-team place at any club.

CHANCE

"I'd basically resigned myself to a move down south or being signed by a Scottish club as back-up.

"The possibility of joining Motherwell didn't seem likely; they had Ally Maxwell, the star of their Scottish Cup win.

"But then Ally

'Well ace Tommo's happy to miss out on big pay day

made it clear he wasn't going to re-sign and my chance came along."

The prospect of replacing local hero Maxwell didn't intimidate Tommo but he admits he was conscious of his predecessor's standing.

He says: "Ally had a couple of great seasons before he decided he wanted to move on.

"But as far as replacing a local legend is concerned, you have to remember I did the same thing when I look over from Hamish McAlpine at Dundee United in 1984. Hamish had been a Tannadice institution for 18 years!

"That's not to say it was all plain sailing. My Motherwell debut was a friendly against Queen of the South and I did get a bit of stick.

"And on my League debut, my blunder cost us a goal and a point against Falkirk.

"Neil Duffy headed the ball into the box and I came to claim it.

"I started to think of what I was going to do once I'd caught it, the ball bounced off my hand and Simon Stainrod stuck it in.

MYTH

"Funnily enough, the Motherwell fans gave me a break then and they've been terrific ever since."

Tommo's form this season, including terrific saves from Old Firm stars Stevie Fulton and Ally McCoist to kick off the new year, has helped 'Well fans forget about Ally Maxwell.

He'd like nothing better than to pick up his Scotland career



ALLY MAXWELL

after a nine-year gap.

And that's despite a long-standing rumour that he blotted his international copybook by having an after-match beer on the way home from a World Cup tie in Israel in 1981.

He is happy to lay that myth to rest, saying: "This is a story that's grown over the years.

"After we'd won in Tel Aviv, I had a beer — and I do mean one small can of lager — on the flight home.

"While I was drinking it, Jock Stein turned around, spotted me and made a remark like: 'Aye, Billy, I'm watching you.'

"I didn't think any more of it, but Ricky McFarlane, who was then manager of St Mirren, later mentioned it to me, so word had obviously got back.

BAD

"But any suggestion it hampered my Scotland career is nonsense. After all, I played in our next match — and won six of my

seven international caps after the Israel game.

"That doesn't sound to me like I was in someone's bad books!" Tommo didn't pick up a single international cap in his seven years at Tannadice — but sees no reason he shouldn't change all that at Fir Park.

"It bothered me at Tannadice," he says. "I had five-and-a-half consistent seasons where the club were getting to Cup finals at home and abroad and yet I wasn't being mentioned for Scotland.

"Eventually I decided that maybe it wasn't to be — but I believe I'm playing as consistently now as I ever was at United."

SKIN

Tommo has his sights on a place in Roxburgh's squad for the European Championship warm-up games against Northern Ireland, Finland, the US, Canada, and Norway.

"I'd be lying if I said I didn't feel I was playing as well as eit-

her Andy Goram or Henry Smith," says Tommo.

"I'm 34 in a couple of weeks, but I don't believe that matters a bit.

"Henry will be 36 in March and he's playing out of his skin.

"All I can do is try and play well enough for Motherwell and if Andy picks me, great.

"He picked me for Scotland at Under-18 and Under-21 level, so he knows what my character is like."

Even though his international opportunities have been very limited, Tommo has found fame in another area.

His namesake, also known as Billy the Fish, is a star character in Viz comic.

BOTTLE

Billy — the Motherwell one — chuckles: "I know all about it.

"Two guys came up to me when I was smashing a charity bot-

tle in a pub in Dundee and told me about it.

"And I've since received T-shirts and copies of the magazine

from fans who've spotted the name.

"No royalties, mind. Maybe I should drop the publishers a line!"



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ABSW BEST FOR SOCCER ACTION

AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY — FEBRUARY 4, 1992



HOWAY THE

Big Mac backs Geordie Branfoot to Stoke up misery for United



SOUTHAMPTON STAR MATTHEW LE TISSIER

LAWRIE McMenemy started Ian Branfoot in the pro game. And he's sticking by him!

Big Mac thinks Branfoot can steer stragglers Southampton to shock FA Cup victory over First Division leaders Manchester United in the FA Cup replay.

Winning won't start any street parties like the time 16 years ago when Saints beat United 1-0 in the Wembley final, but it would be a mighty step forward in Branfoot's battle to win over The Dell.

SUCCESS

Branfoot is the second boss brought in to try to match fellow Geordie McMenemy's feats.

But he created a speed record for establishing a hate relationship with the fans. They didn't like his style, nor his decision to axe England Under-21 striker Matt Le Tissier.

McMenemy believes both will deliver, given

support and time.

"I have a good deal of time for Ian Branfoot," he says. It was me who helped bring him into football.

"I took him down to Sheffield, Wednesday when Alan Brown was manager. I took him as a player to Doncaster and recommended him for the manager's job at Reading.

"He had an unhappy start at Southampton. The crowd weren't happy and they made their point. Now they should get behind him and the team, especially in a match like this.

"The chairman, Guy Askham, has made the club's position clear over him. And continuity is one of the strengths of this club.

"It's one reason why clubs like Southampton, Ipswich and Forest have been able to take some of the honours away from the big clubs.

STRENGTH

"Now the results are coming. They are having a good run, and I saw their Zenith Data



LAWRIE McMENEMY

win over Chelsea a fortnight ago that was more convincing than the 2-0 scoreline."

Le Tissier, with £3m hot-shot Alan Shearer, was part of the healthy legacy McMenemy left six years ago.

"They are follow-ons from my regime — I gave them their starts. They are match-winners," he says.

"But I could understand Ian's position over Le Tissier. Matthew himself said leav-

ing him out was a big gee-up."

United may find out in the replay just how big a gee-up it's been.

A few weeks ago, such an upset by the relegation fighters would have been the stuff of alcoholic hazy. Even winning a match was special. England No.2 McMenemy now reckons Branfoot, combining with Le Tissier, can shove Alex Ferguson's favourites off the Cup

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DON'T STAB CASCARINO

PERTH pin-up Vinnie Arkins has one message for his fellow Celtic fans: "Lay off Tony Cascarino."

St Johnstone's blond bomber could have been filling Cascarino's shirt but snubbed boss Liam Brady's offer.

Instead, the 6ft Irish striker joined Saints from Shamrock Rovers for a bargain £55,000 and has now become a big Premier League personality.

He's scored five times in just eight starts, including goals against both Rangers and Celtic.

That's one more goal than £1.1 million Cascarino has managed in 14 starts and 11 substitute appearances.

But 21-year-old Vinnie insists: "I don't think anyone should be sticking daggers into Tony's back."

"He's had a bit of misfortune because he plays in a side that creates chances but hasn't been able to stick them away as he'd like to."

"But you don't know what's around the corner in this business."

"I could go out and fail to find the net for four and five games

Says VINNIE ARKINS

The £55,000 striker who couldn't wait for Celtic

while Tony could get a barrowload.

"Look at Mark Hateley. He wasn't popular with Rangers fans at first but they love him now."

"I've been on Ireland trips with Tony and I watched all their World Cup games."

"He was part and parcel of that team and had a great personal track record."

Vinnie's support for

Cascarino is all the more remarkable because the Dublin-born youngster could have been leading the Celtic attack this season.

FIRST

But Arkins admits he lost patience when Liam Brady tried to sign him last.

The Celtic boss insisted the deal could only go through if he

managed to unload surplus players like Martin Hayes, John Hewitt and Andy Walker.

"I thought it was fair enough at first," he says Arkins.

"Like any other Dublin kid, I'd been a Celtic fan from boyhood and all that mattered was that they'd made me an offer."

"But when nothing happened for weeks I met Liam again and told him I wanted to go over to Glasgow there and then."

"He told me I'd have to wait until he got rid of certain players but insisted the deal was still on."

TITLE LATEST: It's all in your champion ABSW Best

SAINTS!

road.

DIFFERENT

He says: "United are having a fine run, and I saw them when they won 1-0 down there in September. They will feel it was comfortable."

"But they caught Southampton with a new manager and new players bedding in."

"Now it's different. The results are coming and the cup's been special down here since 1976. This is a one-off and Alex Ferguson will be aware of what can happen in these situations," Ferguson's predecessor, Tommy Docherty, will certainly be aware. His 1976 finalists were short odds to take the cup back to Old Trafford.

The Doc had a side of stars including Alex Stepney, Steve Coppell, Lou Macari, Sammy McLroy, and Martin Buchan. Saints had Mick Channon, Peter Osgood, and Jim McCalliog, but they could finish no higher than sixth in the Second Division.

But little Bobby Stokes sparked off a celebration they still talk about with the only goal seven minutes from time.

Stokes, a quiet hero, did little else in his career, but he gave ex-guardsman McMenemy the highest high of his.

Says McMenemy: "It's still the biggest one to win. But for Bobby it put him into the limelight, something he could have done without."

GOAL

"I'm sure if he'd



MANCHESTER UNITED BOSS ALEX FERGUSON

known what it was going to mean, he would have been delighted to pass on that moment to someone else.

"He was a quiet, unassuming fellow, with a lovely little smile. He won a car for scoring that goal — but couldn't drive! That's the sort of lad he was."

"He was a team player appreciated by his fellow pros, but never a star name."

"He comes into the category of unlikely Wembley winners like

Everton's Mike Trebilcock and Ipswich's Roger Osborne.

"He will be forever remembered for that goal and the memory of that will grow fonder and fonder with the years."

"But I am not sure he enjoyed all the extra publicity at the time. We'd come from an area that had never won the Cup before, and when we came back, the street parties seemed to go on for ever."

Stokes, 41 this

month, can't escape his fame.

"I'm amazed," he says, "how many people still recognise me."

★ **MANCHESTER UNITED**, quoted at dead-cert 1-3 favourites for the League title by bookies William Hill, are 6-1 for the FA Cup and League double!

Hill's will give you 19-2 for the treble with the Rumbelow's Cup.



"Ray McKinnon, Duncan Ferguson and Paddy Connolly were other young lads with me who've now broken through."

"But it was different for most youngsters there. They didn't have to live away from home on not much money."

Vinnie insists he has no regrets about knocking back Celtic.

"Every striker is in the shop window and if he keeps scoring goals anything can happen," he says.

"Celtic were something special to me as a kid back home but right now they're a million miles away."

PAY UP CELTIC!

CELTIC have been hit by a shock cash demand — for an AMATEUR player!

League of Ireland outfit Derry City last week wrote to the Parkhead side seeking payment for defender Nigel Melly, who joined them in August — and have UEFA rules to back them up.

Derry chairman Jack McAuley said: "UEFA rules state that we are entitled to compensation even though he was an amateur with us."

"After all, why should we develop and nurture players just for professional clubs to snatch them away without it costing them

Derry make a cash call for Melly

a penny?

"Celtic have 30 days to reply, after which we would contact UEFA — but I hope to resolve the matter amicably."

UEFA have already stepped in on two oc-

casions — ordering Huddersfield to pay Bohemians £25,000 for defender David Campbell and Arsenal £6,000 for a YTS trainee from a Dublin juvenile side.

UEFA spokeswoman Ursula Krahenbuhl said: "This regulation has been in force since July 1990."

"It entitles clubs who transfer players to some compensation, regardless of his status."

Hope

"We would prefer that clubs settle matters amicably — but if not, the selling club's request for compensation will be settled by UEFA."

Swedes want Stainrod

FALKIRK's Simon Stainrod is set for a summer move to Sweden ... but not for the Euro Finals.

The English striker — a bargain transfer target of Dundee and Partick Thistle — has had an offer to play in the Swedish Pre-

mier League during the summer.

And he admits: "It would be perfect for me — because I hate pre-season training!"

But he promised: "I'll be back playing in Scotland next season."

■ **TOP Scots kids** like Duncan Ferguson of

Dundee United and Hibs' Chris Reid are set to be given under-21 baptisms — six months ahead of schedule.

The early promotion comes because their Danish opponents at Easter Road next month are unable to field a full under-21 side.

IN THE BACK

"I put it to him that he could sign me for the start of next season but he said he couldn't do that because football was a strange game."

GRAB

"When I told him I was going to speak to St Johnstone he wished me good luck if I got a deal but if things didn't work out to go back to him."

"But when I spoke to Perth boss Alex Totten I liked what I saw."

Delighted Totten reveals that Celtic even made a last-ditch attempt to grab Arkins with a phone call to

McDiarmid Park on the morning he signed.

But Totten insists: "Vinnie made the right decision. He could have gone to Celtic but when would he have got into the first team?"

"Here he's becoming a popular personality and he's developing an exciting partnership with Paul Wright."

Arkins, who has eight Under-21 caps as well as youth and schools appearances for the Republic, is no stranger to Scottish football.

He spent two seasons at the Dundee United soccer acad-

my before walking out on Jim McLean.

"I asked for a rise but I was still talking peanuts compared with what top pros were getting," explains Arkins.

GREAT

"It wasn't a king's ransom but he wouldn't give it to me so I went home to Dublin and never came back."

"I didn't play football for six months because they wouldn't release me."

"Even so, I enjoyed the football at Tannadice. It was great playing there and I felt I was close to getting into the first team."

BOBBY'S STILL A DAZZLER

SIXTEEN years ago Bobby Stokes was celebrating with champagne his final goal that beat mighty United.

And Bobby, 41 this month, still can't escape his fame. "I'm amazed how many people still recognise me," he says.

He now runs the Harbour View cafe in Portsmouth Harbour near the mooring of Henry VIII's battleship the Mary Rose. ☆ Bobby's career

petered out after his stint with Saints. He went off to the US, joining Washington Diplomats. And he was flown back as a special guest for Lawrie McMenemy's 'This Is Your Life' TV tribute.

Portsmouth signed him but his spell was brief. He suffered the other side of attention at Fratton Park the fans' hostility to imports from their south coast rivals.

He is an occasional visitor to The Dell, but he'll probably be working in his cafe.

FOREST THREAT

BRIAN CLOUGH faces a fixture threat to Forest's knock-out treble if frost postpones again the FA Cup tie with Hereford.

■ Forest are heavily involved in three Cups over the next three weeks.

● Postponement would put the tie off until February 5, when they are scheduled to play Crystal Palace in a Rumbelow's Cup quarter-final.

● The two-legged Rumbelow's semi-finals are due to start four days later.

● And Forest were down to play Leicester in their Zenith Cup area final on February 3.

ABSW BEST - We give you big names and big games

This week's fixture list

**FRIDAY
FEBRUARY 7**

Third Division
Stockport v Huddersfield
Fourth Division
Crewe v Carlisle

**SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 8**

First Division
Chelsea v Palace
Coventry v Liverpool
Everton v QPR
Luton v Norwich
Man United v Sheff Wed
Notts Co v Arsenal
Oldham v Leeds
Sheff United v Man City
Southampton v Forest
Tottenham v West Ham
Wimbledon v Aston Villa
Second Division
Barnsley v Cambridge U
Bristol R v Sunderland
Charlton v Southend
Derby v Millwall
Grimsby v Blackburn
Ipswich v Portsmouth
Leicester v Oxford
Newcastle v Bristol C
Port Vale v Middlesbrough



Manchester United's Mark Hughes and Wimbledon's John Scales

Swindon v Brighton
Tranmere v Wolves
Watford v Plymouth
Third Division
Birmingham v West Brom
Bolton v Chester
Bradford C v Bournemouth
Brentford v Bury
Darlington v Hull City
Exeter v Wigan
Hartlepool v Peterboro
Leyton O v Stoke
Preston v Fulham
Reading v Shrewsbury
Swansea v Torquay
Fourth Division
Aldershot v Walsall
Barnet v Scarborough

Burnley v Lincoln
Doncaster v Cardiff
Halifax v Rochdale
Hereford v Chesterfield
Mansfield v Scunthorpe
Northampton v Gillingham
Wrexham v Blackpool
York City v Rotherham

Scottish Premier
Aberdeen v Hibernian
Celtic v Airdrie
Hearts v Dundee Utd
Motherwell v Dunfermline
St Johnstone v Falkirk
St Mirren v Rangers

Scottish First
Ayr Utd v Meadowbank
Dundee v Kilmarnock
Hamilton v Clydebank
Partick v Montrose
Raith v Morton
Stirling A v Forfar
Scottish Second
Alloa v Brechin
Arbroath v Clyde
Dumbarton v Stranraer
East Fife v Q Park
East Stirling v Berwick
Queen of Sth v Albion R
Stenhousemuir v Cowdenbeath

Palace sale is really on

Crystal Palace's clear-out continues when striker Marco Gabbiadini signed for Derby in a \$A2.92 million move.

Gabbiadini, who only joined the First Division side four months ago for \$A4.37 million, agreed to drop back into Division Two after two days of talks with Derby manager Arthur Cox.

Two weeks ago Palace sold Wales full-back Paul Bodin, signed from Swindon for \$A1,336,000, back to his former club for \$A546,600.

However, the London club have rejected player-exchange offers

from Everton and Nottingham Forest for England midfielder Andy Gray, who was transfer-listed earlier this week.

Everton offered former England striker Tony Cottee and Scotland winger Pat Nevin in exchange, but Forest refused to reveal their bait to land Gray.

"Andy Gray is a top-class player and we were not interested in what Everton had to offer," said Palace chairman Ron Noades.

"We also turned down Forest because we know that the players we would be interested in wouldn't be available."

Wimbledon are

poised to sign defender Jon Gittens from Southampton, 24 hours after he turned down a transfer to Second Division Newcastle.

At the same time the London club slapped a \$A6.07 million price tag on defender John Scales, who is being chased by Liverpool.

Dons manager Joe Kinnear insisted: "We're trying to buy Gittens not to replace Scales, but to play alongside him."

"Liverpool did enquire some time ago about John, but there's been no fresh interest lately and even if there was, it wouldn't make any difference. We don't want to sell him."

ALL THE RESULTS FROM BRITAIN

ENGLISH DIVISION ONE

ARSENAL.....1	MANCHESTER U.....1
CRYSTAL PAL.....0	COVENTRY.....1
LEEDS.....3	NOTTS COUNTY.....0
LIVERPOOL.....1	CHELSEA.....2
MANCHESTER C.....1	TOTTENHAM.....0
NORWICH.....2	SOUTHAMPTON.....1
NOTTINGHAM F.....2	SHEFFIELD UTD.....5
QUEEN'S PARK.....1	WIMBLEDON.....2
SHEFFIELD WED.....3	LUTON.....2
WEST HAM.....1	OLDHAM.....0

ENGLISH DIVISION TWO

BLACKBURN.....2	SWINDON.....1
BRIGHTON.....2	CHARLTON.....2
BRISTOL CITY.....0	BARNLEY.....2
MIDDLESBROUGH.....0	GRIMSBY.....0
MILLWALL.....2	IPSWICH.....1
OXFORD.....5	NEWCASTLE.....2
PLYMOUTH.....0	BRISTOL ROV.....0
PORTSMOUTH.....0	DERBY.....1
SOUTHEND.....1	WATFORD.....0

SUNDERLAND.....1	PORT VALE.....1
WOLVERHAMPTON.....1	LEICESTER.....0
CAMBRIDGE.....0	TRANMERE.....0

ENGLISH DIVISION THREE

BOURNEMOUTH.....0	LEYTON ORIENT.....1
FULHAM.....1	BOLTON.....1
HUDDERSFIELD.....1	PRESTON.....2
HULL.....0	HARTLEPOOL.....2
PETERBOROUGH.....5	READING.....3
SHREWSBURY.....0	DARLINGTON.....2
STOKE.....1	SWANSEA.....1
TORQUAY.....1	BRADFORD.....1
W.BROMWICH.....2	BRENTFORD.....0

ENGLISH DIVISION FOUR

GILLINGHAM.....2	DONCASTER.....1
LINCOLN.....0	YORK.....0
(abandoned halftime due to fog)	
ROTHERHAM.....2	ALDERSHOT.....0
WALSALL.....2	BURNLEY.....2

Postponed: Blackpool v Barnet, Carlisle v Wrexham, Chesterfield v Halifax, Rochdale v Maidstone, Scarborough v Crewe, Southend v Northampton.

SCOTTISH PREMIER DIVISION

ABERDEEN.....1	DUNFERMLINE.....1
CELTIC.....2	FALKIRK.....1
HEARTS.....0	RANGERS.....1
MOTHERWELL.....1	HIRERNIAN.....1
ST JOHNSTONE.....1	DUNDEE UTD.....1
ST MIRREN.....4	ARDRIE.....1

SCOTTISH DIVISION ONE

AYR.....3	CLYDEBANK.....1
DUNDEE.....2	MEADOWBANK.....1
HAMILTON.....0	MORTON.....0
HARTLEPOOL.....2	KILMARNOCK.....1
RAITH.....2	FORFAR.....1
STIRLING.....4	MONTROSE.....1

SCOTTISH DIVISION TWO

ALBION.....0	EAST FIFE.....1
ARBROATH.....2	STENHOUSEM.....0
COWDENBEATH.....0	CLYDE.....3
DUMFRIES.....3	QUEEN OF STH.....1
EAST STIRLING.....2	ALLOA.....1
QUEEN'S PARK.....0	BRECHIN.....1
STRANRAER.....2	BERWICK.....2

NORTHERN IRISH LEAGUE

ARDS.....1	BANGOR.....4
BALLYCLARE.....1	CLIFTONVILLE.....1
COLERAINE.....1	DISTILLERY.....0
CRUSADERS.....2	NEWRY.....0
GLENAVON.....2	BALLYMENA.....0
LARNE.....2	GLENTORAN.....3
LINFIELD.....1	PORTADOWN.....2
OMAGH.....6	CARRICK.....2

ENGLISH DIVISION ONE

23 - Gary Lineker (Tottenham)

18 - Ian Wright (Arsenal), Dean Saunders (Liverpool), Brian McClair (Manchester United)
16 - Alan Shearer (Southampton)
15 - David White (Manchester City), Robert Fleck (Norwich), Mike Small (West Ham)
14 - Alan Smith (Arsenal), Mark Bright (Crystal Palace), Peter Beardsley (Everton), Lee Chapman (Leeds), David Hirst (Sheffield Wednesday)

ENGLISH DIVISION TWO

28 - John Aldridge (Tranmere)
27 - Duncan Shearer (Swindon)
19 - Brett Angell (Southend)
16 - David Speedie (Blackburn), Steve Bull (Wolverhampton)

ENGLISH DIVISION THREE

28 - Dean Holdsworth (Brentford)
24 - Iwan Roberts (Huddersfield)
21 - Wayne Biggins (Stoke)
18 - Tony Phillips (Bolton)

ENGLISH DIVISION FOUR

26 - Dave Bamber (Blackpool)
22 - Gary Bull (Barnet)
21 - Mark Carter (Barnet)
19 - Mike Connolly (Burnley)

SCOTTISH PREMIER DIVISION

26 - Ally McCoist (Rangers)
18 - Tommy Coyne (Celtic), Charlie Nicholas (Celtic)
16 - Scott Crabbie (Hearts), Keith Wright (Hibernian)
14 - Mark Hateley (Rangers)

SCOTTISH DIVISION ONE

21 - Gordon Dalglish
19 - Alex Mathie (Clydebank)
18 - Kenneth Eadie (Clydebank)

ALL YOUR TABLES FROM ENGLAND

ENGLISH 1ST DIV

	P	W	D	L	F	Apts
Leeds	27	15	11	1	52	21 56
Manch Utd	26	16	8	2	47	20 56
Liverpool	27	12	11	4	35	24 47
Manch City	27	13	8	6	36	29 47
Sheff Wed	26	13	7	6	42	32 46
Chelsea	27	10	8	9	37	39 38
Aston Villa	26	11	4	11	34	31 37
Arsenal	26	9	9	8	41	32 36
Cryst Pal	25	9	8	8	36	43 35
Tottenham	26	10	4	12	35	34 34
Norwich	26	8	9	9	32	35 33
Q.P.R.	27	7	12	8	28	33 33
Notts Fst	25	9	5	11	40	40 32
Coventry	26	9	4	13	28	29 31
Oldham	27	8	7	12	41	47 31
Sheff Utd	27	8	6	13	39	46 30
Wimbledon	26	6	10	10	30	34 28
Notts City	26	7	6	13	28	37 27
West Ham	26	6	9	11	25	38 27
Southampton	26	5	7	14	26	44 22
Luton	26	5	7	14	20	47 22

ENGLISH 2ND DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	Apts
Blackburn	27	15	6	6	43	25 51
Southend	29	14	7	7	43	32 50
Ipswich	29	14	7	7	43	33 50
Cambridge	27	12	12	6	39	28 45
Middlesbrough	27	12	12	6	39	28 45
Leicester	28	11	13	6	37	33 45
Portsmouth	28	12	12	6	35	28 43
Charlton	28	12	12	6	36	34 43
Swindon	28	11	10	7	48	37 42
Wolves	28	11	10	7	38	31 42
Derby	27	12	9	6	36	29 42
Sunderland	29	11	12	6	44	41 39
Millwall	28	10	12	6	44	48 36
Tranmere	26	7	14	14	27	27 35
Brist Rov	30	10	10	10	35	44 34
Brist City	30	10	10	10	32	42 34
Watford	29	10	10	10	32	36 33
Port Vale	30	10	10	10	14	30 39
Plymouth	27	10	10	10	14	30 39
Grimsby	26	10	10	10	11	30 39
Barnsley	30	10	10	10	11	30 39
Brighton	30	10	10	10	15	38 48 29
Newcastle	30	10	10	10	15	38 48 29
Oxford	29	7	17	15	42	50 26

ENGLISH 3RD DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	Apts
Brentford	28	16	4	8	48	32 52
W.B.A.	28	14	8	6	44	28 50
Stoke	28	13	10	5	42	27 49
Birmingham	26	13	8	5	45	29 47
Huddersfield	27	12	9	6	33	23 45
Stockport	26	13	5	8	47	36 44
Ley Orient	26	11	9	6	36	29 42
Hartlepool	26	11	7	8	38	33 40
Bolton	25	9	10	6	36	32 37
Peterboro	26	9	10	7	34	35 37
Shrewsbury	28	10	7	11	34	36 37
Bournemouth	26	9	9	8	22	23 36
Exeter	25	8	8	9	23	38 35
Reading	26	8	8	9	33	33 32
Swansea	26	9	5	12	34	40 32
Fulham	27	8	8	11	32	39 32
Preston	27	8	7	12	34	39 31
Bradford	27	6	11	10	36	40 29
Bury	25	7	8	10	31	36 29
Darlington	27	8	4	15	41	50 28
Torquay	27	7	4	15	23	39 28
Hull	27	7	5	15	28	35 26
Wigan	25	5	9	11	29	43 24
Chester	25	4	7	14	26	39 19

ENGLISH 4TH DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	Apts
Burnley	25	16	3	6	52	29 51
Mansfield	25	15	4	6	51	30 49
Blackpool	26	14	6	6	50	29 48
Rotherham	26	13	8	5	40	24 47
Barnet	25	14	4	7	50	34 46
Scunthorpe	26	12	7	7	39	38 43
Rochdale	23	11	9	3	33	25 42
Cardiff	25	11	9	5	38	31 42
Crewe	22	11	5	6	41	25 38
Northampton	25	8	9	8	37	32 33
Scarboro	24	9	6	9	37	39 33
Chesterfield	24	9	6	9	23	28 33
Gillingham	27	8	8	9	37	32 32
Walsall	25	8	8	11	34	40 32
Hereford	22	8	4	10	28	28 28
Halifax	27	7	6	11	21	39 27
York	25	6	8	11	25	33 26
Carlisle	26	5	10	11	27	36 25
Lincoln	25	6	7	12	19	34 25
Wrexham	24	6	7	11	29	45 25
Maidstone	25	4	11	10	24	35 23
Aldershot	25	3	6	16	18	41 15
Doncaster	26	2	7	17	23	49 13

... AND HOW THEY STAND IN SCOTLAND

SCOTTISH PREMIER DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	Apts
Rangers	31	23	4	4	71	21 50
Hearts	31	20	6	5	45	26 46
Celtic	31	16	8	7	62	34 40
Hibernian	31	12	13	6	42	30 37
Aberdeen	31	13	9	9	46	34 35
Dundee Utd	31	11	12	8	49	38 34
Motherwell	31	8	12	11	31	37 28
St Johnst	31	11	6	14	39	54 28
Falkirk	31	8	8	15	39	53 24
Airdrie	31	9	5	17	35	51 23
St Mirren	31	4	8	19	24	56 16
Dunfermlin	31	2	7	22	13	62 11

SCOTTISH DIVISION ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	Apts
Dundee	31	18	7	6	58	33 43
Hamilton	31	15	10	6	52	36 40
Partick	31	16	6	9	44	31 38
Raith	31	15	8	8	39	30 38
Kilmarnock	31	13	9	9	44	30 35
Morton	31	10	7	10	48	41 33
Ayr	31	12	8	11	51	43 32
Stirling	31	10	9	12	34	39 29
Clydebank	31	8	10	13	46	56 26
Meadowbank	30	5	13	12	29	41 23
Montrose	31	13	15	3	36	62 19
Forfar	31	3	8	20	27	66 14

SCOTTISH DIVISION TWO

	P	W	D	L	F	Apts
Dumbarton	25	14	7	4	47	25 35
Clyde	25	12	6	7	37	25 30
East Fife	25	11	8	6	44	36 30
Cowdenbth	23	11	6	5	39	33 28
Arbroath	25	8	12	5	31	27 28
E Stirling	24	10	7	7	47	44 27
Alloa	25	10	7	8	31	28 27
Q o' Sth	26	10	4	12	48	57 24
Brechin	25	8	7	9	37	35 23
Stranraer	24	9	4	12	32	39 24
Queens Pk	25	8	4	13	31	41 20
Berwick	24	5	9	10	29	36 19
Albion	25	5	7	13	29	44 17
Stenhousem	25	5	6	14	29	41 16

McCOIST IS A WINNER!

HOT-shot striker Ally McCoist fired Glasgow Rangers towards their fourth consecutive Scottish League title at Heart of Midlothian with the only goal of the potential championship decider.

The Scottish international's 24th League score of the campaign lifted the Ibrox side four points clear of Hearts, the only team with a realistic chance of catching the champions.

McCoist struck in the 67th minute of the tense table-topper, blasting home from 12 yards following a long throw by David Robertson to virtually secure European football next season.

Aberdeen, in contrast, are in danger of missing out for the first time in 15 years after a disappointing 1-1 home draw with lowly Dunfermline.

Aberdeen managed to seize the lead in the 73rd minute when youngster Eoin Jess claimed his 12th goal of the season, but substitute Mick McParland equalised eight minutes later.

St Johnstone and Dundee United also finished all square at 1-1 after a thrilling Tayside derby which contained a heap of goal-mouth incidents, a penalty and four bookings.

United's hero-tur-

ned-villain was Dutch keeper van de Kamp. Twice he raced outside the area to rob Saints' little winger Allan Moore, but then fouled in his own box to allow Paul Wright to equalise Duncan Ferguson's opener from the spot.

Motherwell and Hibernian completed a trio of 1-1 draws. Joe Tortolano put Hibs ahead after 65 minutes, only for Ian Angus to equalise two minutes later.

Celtic scored comfortable 3-0 home win over Falkirk. Tommy Coyne netted his 100th Premier League goal to edge the Glasgow club in front a minute after the break and skipper Paul McStay

added a second in the 64th minute.

Struggling St Mirren were even more convincing winners over Airdrie, coasting home 4-1 on the back of a Gudni Torfason hat-trick.

His first goal came via a 15th minute penalty conceded by Gus Caesar, who was signed on Friday from England Second Division club Bristol City.

The Iclander added another goal two minutes later and although a penalty by Dave Kirkwood on 77 minutes gave Airdrie a lifeline, Torfason completed his hat-trick four minutes later.

John Hewitt completed the rout three minutes from time.



Hot-shot Ally McCoist continues to be in sizzling form for red-hot Rangers.

Cox makes a move to nab Crook

DERBY want to follow up the £1.2m capture of Marco Gabbiadini by signing Norwich midfielder Ian Crook.

The clubs have agreed a fee of around £50,000 but Derby boss Arthur Cox now has to convince Crook to step down to the Second Division.

Cox has also been linked with Crook's £50,000-rated teammate Tim Sherwood.

But Derby could face competition from Crystal Palace, who see Sherwood, 23, as a possible replacement for Andy Gray.

LIVERPOOL expect to settle personal terms with Istvan Kozma last weekend after agreeing an initial fee of £300,000 with Dunfermline.

But to get Kozma's work permit transferred to England, boss Graeme Souness has to convince the Home Office the Hungarian is needed for regular first-team duty.

ROKER FOYLED!

PETER Davenport gifted Port Vale a 55 second start and set up a cracker.

Former England man Davenport made a terrible hash of a clearance to let in Martin Foyle for a shock opener.

At that stage the bubbly must have lost its fizz for caretaker boss Malcolm Crosby after his Manager of the Month award.

But a 40th minute equaliser from top scorer Gordon Armstrong brought the smiles back.

MISTAKE

Sunderland had enough chances in the

Martin nips in and halts Mal's charge

SUNDERLAND 1 PORT VALE 1

second half to make it five straight wins for Crosby, in his bid to land the Roker job permanently.

But experienced goalkeeper Mark Grew denied them with four outstanding saves.

And referee John Kirby ignored two penalty appeals for fouls

on Armstrong and Don Goodman.

Said Crosby: "The start was bad and Day held up his hand."

"Goodman thought he should have had a penalty but you've just got to accept it."

Sunderland directors meet this week to consider the manager's position and will defer

a decision at least until after Wednesday night's FA Cup clash at Oxford.

But Crosby certainly could do no more to get his side playing with style and purpose.

Port Vale looked an althogether tougher proposition than the side steam-rolled 3-0 in the Cup on the same ground last month.

They produced a fiercely competitive match after Armstrong had dived in on a Paul Bracewell cross for his ninth league goal of the season.

PRESSURE

Sunderland put the Vale goal under terrific pressure but Grew refused to be beaten.

He made super saves off Goodman, Brian Atkinson and John Kay but saved his best to turn John Byrne's point blank effort onto the bar after 45 minutes.

BEST PLAYER: Bracewell.

Loyal Mal returns

MAL DONAGHY is heading back to Luton for a cut-price £200,000.

The deal won't be completed until the summer because the Irishman has a vital squad role in Manchester United's push for the treble.

Alex Ferguson paid Luton £800,000 for the tenacious centre-back four years ago, but Mal has played under 100 games for United.

The 34-year-old Donaghy, one of Northern Ireland's most capped players, has not been happy to be used only as cover. Fergie is prepared to let him go cheaply as a gesture to his lack of public complaint.

United's England Under-21 hotshot Mark Robins is wanted by Oldham and QPR, but not at Fergie's £1.5million asking price.

Aston Villa boss Ron Atkinson is ready to make a second bid for John Harkes — the £750,000-rated American striker he introduced to English football at Sheffield Wednesday.

Leicester have slapped a £2 million tag on England Under-21 striker Paul Kitson, who is being watched by Liverpool and Wednesday.

Leeds boss Howard Wilkinson has been given a "make your mind up" ultimatum about Hungarian striker Kalman Kovacs.

Wilko has until Tuesday to decide whether to sign the £400,000-rated ace from French club Auxerre.

Kovacs has trained at Leeds all week and made his debut for the reserves.

SWINDON SUNK BY DALGLISH



DAVID MITCHELL

AUSSIE striker Dave Mitchell's great goal looked like halting Kenny Dalglish's side's run at the top.

But the wily Dalglish made the double switch which put them back on the right track.

Swindon silenced the all-ticket Ewood Park crowd with their class football and in the 41st minute they went ahead.

Busy midfielder Micky Hazard took a corner on the left which was headed out.

Swindon's David Kerslake drove a shot freely back into the Rovers' box. Tom Jones blocked the ball, turned and hit a shot which was brilliantly stopped by Bobby Mimms in the Blackburn goal.

SHARP

But Mimms, at full stretch, could only push the ball along the bye-line and Mitchell was in smartly to lash a shot over Mimms into the net from a sharp angle.

But after 55 minutes Dalglish sent on defender Colin Hendry and striker Kevan Garner to replace £1 million striker Mike Newell and Nicky Read. And that turned the game.

Ten minutes later Hendry, who lined up with Garner as a strike pair, put Rovers level.

A cross from Alan Wright was headed on by Scott Sellars and the big defender turned and hit a great shot past Fraser Digby.

Striker David Speedie, who had gone back to midfield, got the Blackburn winner with a great 81st minute solo effort.

He went through the Swindon defence and cracked a great right-foot shot from the edge of the box.

BEST PLAYER: Speedie.

Spot-on Fashanu

TORQUAY 1
BRADFORD 1

JUSTIN FASHANU celebrated being made Torquay skipper by scoring from the spot just after two minutes.

But he needed two attempts after his first hit the post and the kick was ordered to be retaken for encroachment.

This time Fashanu made no mistake and slammed the ball high into the corner.

Bradford player-boss Frank Stapleton was booked for arguing about the decision.

Torquay should have made the game safe before half time and paid when Bradford equalised within 46 seconds of the re-start.

Sean McCarthy belted the ball in off the underside of the bar after Gary Williams and Jewell had fluffed chances.

Torquay had the best chances to wrap up the points but were grateful when Gareth Howells denied McCarthy in the dying seconds.

FERGIE LADS



DAVID ROCASTLE

MANCHESTER UNITED lost the leadership of the League at the club where they are keeping the trophy warm for them.

Last time they were at Highbury, Alex Ferguson's men were merely the supporting cast to an unforgettable night of celebration for Arsenal's own championship-winning season.

This time, they returned to state their own claims on the trophy with an impressive display of class and endurance.

Brian McClair and David Rocastle grabbed the goals in a magnificent first-half dominated by United's superior approach.

It was a difficult standard to maintain and the second-half was a disappointing, scrappy affair by comparison where the most exciting action surrounded the dug-outs.

POWER

United chief Ferguson and Arsenal boss George Graham pointed their fingers, roared instructions across the pitch and jumped up and down in frustration.

Arsenal lost Rocastle to an ankle injury

United dazzlers show title class

ARSENAL 1 MAN UTD 1

half way through the second-half.

They brought on defender Colin Pates instead of forward Anders Limpar and that was an admission that a draw against such powerful opposition was as much as they might expect.

Arsenal's fallen champs reckon they haven't had much luck lately but they must have trooped in for their interval cuppa grateful to be on level terms.

For United entered Highbury to reveal the full range of the talents that have swept them

so excitedly to the top of the First Division.

Much of the menace they threatened stemmed from the pace and control of winger Andrei Kanchelskis.

Mark Hughes, a formidable and muscular man at the centre of attack was superbly supported by Neil Webb and McClair.

And Arsenal were already fearing going behind by the time McClair, with his 18th goal of the season, struck in the 28th minute.

He had rolled a pass forward for Paul Ince, who was on the point of shooting when tackled simultaneously by Rocastle and Steve Bould with keeper David Seaman having rushed from his line.

SLIDE

The ball squirted out of this clash to the unattended McClair, who kicked calmly into the empty net.

But one goal wasn't enough for United and they paid for their adventure a minute from the break when Jimmy Carter sent Ian Wright away.

Rocastle met his cross at the far post to slide the ball low into the net.

BEST PLAYER: Kanchelskis.

THOMAS HAUSER, Sunderland's German striker, is wanted by Motherwell.

The Scottish club's boss Tommy McLean has agreed an £80,000 fee with Roker for their unsettled target man.

McLean hopes to sort out personal terms in time for the big German to play in the Scottish Cup against Rangers.

There are problems over wages with Motherwell sticking to their pay structure.

A friend of Hauser said: "The signing-on fee is good, but Thomas is being asked to take a large cut in his salary."

McLean has been troubled by the club's pay policy. They may have to make an exception to get Hauser.

IT'S MILD WEST

ONE thing is certain from this debacle. There is no threat to the Premier League from the West Country.

When these two sides last met, Rovers hammered Plymouth 5-0 in the FA Cup.

But the 'Wild West' became the 'Mild West' on the weekend as neither side displayed the foggiest idea of hitting the back of the net or providing any sort of entertainment.

The first half was nothing short of abysmal. Both sides hunted in one solid pack, bunched in midfield and showed few ideas for breaking the mould.

Hectic

Plymouth repeatedly thwarted Rovers with their offside trap but then thumped the ball forward in the vain hope of a breakthrough.

Rovers defence had some hectic moments but Brian Parkin was not troubled.

To the visitors' credit they did try to open up using the talents of Tony Souder down the left flank.

Carl Saunders had a clear header from one of his crosses but finished weakly.

Bore draw fails Premier test

PLYMOUTH 0 BRISTOL R 0

Argyle fullback Tony Spearling caused a heart-stopping moment for the home fans with a lofted pass back which Rhys Wilmot had to stretch to hold.

Rovers finished the half stronger — after forcing their first corner in the 39th minute — but they were restricted to long shots.

Ian Alexander hit one which was not far over the top while Pounder and Dave Mehew had little trouble with their efforts.

Plymouth mounted some pressure after the break, probably spurred on by their first shot of the match — an off target volley by Danis Salman from the edge of the box.

The number of mistakes by players on both sides was incredible but no one could capitalise on the succession of misplaced passes, stumbles and plain bad football.

BEST PLAYER: Pounder.

Carl clobbers unlucky Swans

STOKE 2 SWANSEA 1

SWANSEA launched a second half blitz but were foiled by Carl Beeston's spectacular injury-time volley.

The unlucky Swans, overwhelmed in the first half by an impressive Stoke display, piled relentless pressure on the home goal after the break.

And they were rewarded in the 61st minute when Jimmy Gilligan cancelled out Paul Ware's 41st minute strike for Stoke.

Brave Gilligan found the net with a diving header after striker John Williams sent in a dangerous cross from the right.

But with the game

seemingly destined for a draw, midfielder Beeston popped up on the edge of the visitors' box in injury time, smashing the loose ball into the Swansea net.

Swansea keeper Roger Freestone was kept busy throughout the first half and denied on-loan player Kevin Russell twice within a few minutes.

But Stoke's pressure finally paid off when David Kevan found Tony Ellis in the Swansea box.

The Stoke striker sent a delicate touch to unmarked winger Ware who, with the goal at his mercy, coolly slotted the ball in from close range.



Plymouth's Kenny Brown.

STAKE CLAIM

DIV 1 TOP

	P	W	Pt
LEEDS	27	15	56
MAN UTD	26	16	56
LIVERPOOL	27	12	47
MAN CITY	27	13	47
SHEFF W	26	13	46



ENGLAND boss Graham Taylor should take a look at Leeds before he names his next squad.

David Batty and Steve Hodge were in swashbuckling form as Howard Wilkinson's team destroyed one of his former clubs to leap back to the top of the table.

Hodge showed all the form that saw him picked for international duty under Bobby Robson.

And Batty scored the killer second goal against a physical County side who were handicapped by keeper Steve Cherry being restricted by a long standing hip injury.

Winning the ball deep in his own half in the 57th minute, Batty surged clear on a 40-yard run into the opposing penalty area and rattled home a classic angled drive.

It was a golden strike that had the Elland Road fans rising as one man to salute one of their own true Yorkies.

And Batty's form could earn him a place in Taylor's squad for this month's Wembley clash with France.

Rod Wallace applied the finishing touch 13 minutes from time when he clambered above a ruck of bodies to head the third from a free kick scramble.

Batty and Hodge in charge to lift Leeds

LEEDS 3 NOTTS COUNTY 0

LIMPED

By then, County had substituted star striker Tommy Johnson.

The off-form Johnson threw a disdainful look at the County bench as he stalked off straight down the tunnel.

Leeds pulled Gordon Strachan out of the fray 10 minutes from the end to rest his back injury.

But Wilko must have been delighted with young Michael Whitlow, who stepped in at right-back when Mel Sterland limped out at half-time after heading the opening goal.

Lee Chapman's stand-in, Gary Speed, also gave Wilkinson fresh hope for the Leeds vital charge with a competent all-round performance.

Elland Road old timer Norman Hunter said: "The young lads did well, but I still think the club needs to

strengthen the squad if they are going to match the likes of Manchester United and Liverpool."

BEST PLAYER: Batty.



Vinny Jones



TONY DORIGO

Wise halts Kop gallop

LIVERPOOL 1 CHELSEA 2

WIMBLEDON old boys Vinny Jones and Dennis Wise returned to haunt Liverpool and make Chelsea the most unpopular team on Merseyside.

With Manchester United being held to a draw at Arsenal, the Wise winner brought a very untimely halt to Liverpool's title-chasing 12-game unbeaten run.

Both were in the Dons side which shocked Liverpool in the FA Cup final four years ago, and their

goals gave Chelsea their first League win at Anfield since season 1935-6.

They also gave Ian Porterfield's enterprising side a Mersey double after knocking Everton out of the FA Cup a week ago.

Wise found the corner of the net after neat passing by Andy Townsend and Graham Stuart created the chance.

The goal came ten minutes after Ronny Rosenthal, who had equalised Jones' early effort, hit the top of the bar after Ray

Houghton had created the opening.

Chelsea could even afford the luxury of a missed penalty seven minutes from time as Liverpool's title hopes suffered a major setback.

Jones had brought a dull match to life with a stunning goal after 21 minutes.

When Nicky Tanner headed the ball out, Jan Molby tried to find Ray Houghton, but Jones immediately intercepted and his drive went in off the underside of the bar.

BEST PLAYER: Jones.

BIG JACKI FAILS TO POLISH SAD CITY

BRISTOL CITY 0 BARNSELY 2

POLISH striker Jacki Dziekanowski, the new star of Ashton Gate, couldn't provide Bristol City with the goal touch they so badly needed.

■ Just once, in a moment of genius, he had the fans on their feet.

He brought down the ball on his chest and flashed a glorious 18 yard volley goalward to bring a leaping save from Lee Butler.

■ Dziekanowski and the other Bristol danger man, winger Junior Bent, were largely marked out of the game by Barnsley's rigid defence.

With five men at the back, Barnsley gave nothing away and they still had the necessary punch to launch dangerous counterattacks.

■ Barnsley took the lead after 68 minutes. Andy Llewellyn must take some of the blame for failing to foil the close range jab over the line from Owen Archdeacon.

And with just 30 seconds remaining Brendan O'Connell crowned his own useful afternoon by scoring the second.

■ The boos which accompanied the final whistle offered a cruel commentary to manager Jimmy Lumsden at just the time he felt City were turning the corner.

Teenager Mickey Melton came off the bench late in the game as the home side searched in vain to pep up a disjointed and shapeless performance.

BEST PLAYER: Taggart.

SINNER EFAN

BOURNEMOUTH 0 LEYTON ORIENT 1

LEYTON ORIENT top scorer Kevin Nugent lifted his goal tally to 14 with a classy goal to bury Cup giant Bournemouth at Dean Court.

Nugent, the man whose two goals dumped First Division Oldham out of the Cup earlier this season, brilliantly collected a long ball before calmly

rolling the ball past Bournemouth keeper Vince Bartram.

But Bournemouth striker Efan Ekoku could easily have levelled had he not wasted a string of good chances when it seemed easier to score.

Ekoku's first opportunity came when Orient defender Keith Day slipped as he tried to run the ball back to keeper Chris Turner, but after Ekoku had

rounded the keeper, Day recovered to block on the line.

Ekoku had two good chances in two minutes after the break but twice Turner stood up long enough to force an error and clear for Orient.

Then Jimmy Case set up Matthew Holmes to run through and lob Turner but Terry Howard ran back to clear off the line.



TONY'S TONIC

ROTHERHAM 2 ALDERSHOT 0

ROTHERHAM skated closer to promotion after freezing out Fourth Division paupers Aldershot.

Two second half goals were enough to earn the win and hoist them into fourth spot in the table.

But until striker Tony Cunningham grabbed a 61st minute lead, Rotherham were on the wrong end of a

frosty reception from the fans.

It turned even cooler when midfielder Shaun Goodwin still attracting close attention from Everton — messed up a penalty.

The spot kick, after Cunningham was bowled over in the area, was blazed over the top by the 32-year-old for the 4th missed Rotherham spot kick in a row.

And Goodwin was the first to jump with

joy when Cunningham rattled in a 15 yard shot just eight minutes after the penalty fiasco.

But Goodwin, not at his best on the tricky surface, redeemed himself four minutes from the end when he wrapped up the win.

He cut into the area smartly to ram home the second goal after substitute Stuart Barlow laid off a sweet ball.

CANARIES CALL FOR ROBSON



But it looks like a battle with Benfica

BOBBY ROBSON will get the boot at the end of this season. PSV Eindhoven have decided to break with the former England manager, although they do not want to make their decision public until next month.

★ OUR exclusive story on December 24

EUROPEAN giants Benfica are ready to battle it out with Norwich this summer to take Bobby Robson as manager.

But the pull of home makes the Norwich Canaries clear favourites to sign him when he quits Dutch champions PSV Eindhoven.

The former England boss could move into a new club job with one of his former international favourites, Bryan Robson or Peter Shilton, as his apprentice sidekick. These are the exciting alternatives attracting Robson as he leads PSV's bid to retain the title.

Portuguese aces Benfica, who put Arsenal out of this sea-

son's European Cup, are impressed by Robson's track record as they prepare for the loss of coach Sven-Goran Eriksson to Sampdoria in Italy.

Robson, 59 this month, is still ambitious to conquer new territory and make use of his vast experience.

A partnership of the Robsons, Bobby and his former internatio-

nal skipper, would go down a bomb in their native North-East, where the Newcastle and Sunderland posts are the subject of intense speculation.

Robson senior though, is much more likely to be lured back to East Anglia.

He still owns his house in Ipswich, where he has the family ties of three sons and a

grandchild.

Robson's successes include a European trophy as boss of Ipswich and a World Cup semi-finals place with England in Italy in 1990.

He leaves his £400,000-a-year role in Holland at the end of this season, as exclusively predicted in ABSW last December.

FRENCH HAND BACK STEVEN



TREVOR STEVEN

Trev's not had his £250,000 cut

TREVOR Stevens is to be handed back to Glasgow Rangers by French champs Marseille.

Boss Bernard Tapie has confirmed to Ibrox chairman David Murray he is likely to be returning the player at the end of May.

In a letter signed by the club's finance chief, Alain Laroche, Marseille confirmed Steven will be sent home unless they can find the £2.5m balance of his £5.5m transfer fee.

Marseille have not been able to pay Ste-

ven a PENNY of his £250,000 signing-on fee.

Steven's return would be a remarkable coup for Murray, who has lost the England star for just one season AND pocketed £3m from Marseille into the bargain.

Murray said: "We have received a signed document from Marseille confirming that if the money we are due is not forthcoming, Trevor will be a Rangers player at the end of May."

PROMISE

Steven was bought

And Rangers can keep £3m fee

in August as the jewel in Marseille's crown — but is now languishing in the reserves.

The massive signing-on fee and his £15,000-a-week wages have become a millstone around Tapie's neck.

Tapie, owner of sportswear giants Adidas, has tried to offload Steven to a string of clubs — including Italian champions Sampdoria, Liverpool and Everton — for a cut-price £2.4m.

But this week Sampdoria, favourites for Steven's signature,

told Marseille they were pulling out.

They fear they will not get their money back on a player who would be 31 by the end of a two-year contract.

A French football insider revealed: "Since before Christmas, the player's advisers have been touting him around Europe but Tapie wants too much money."

"In the cold light of day, Tapie's debt from the Steven deal is £3.6m because of what he owes Rangers, the signing-on fee still outstanding and the player's wages."

Souness

Don for-

Wilko is

the No. 1

Leeds surged back to the top of the First Division on the day Liverpool's late title push was blocked by two old Dons.

Goals from Mel Sterland, David Batty and Rod Wallace gave Leeds a 3-0 win over Notts County to leap-frog over Manchester United, held 1-1 at fallen champions Arsenal.

Liverpool crashed to a team who hadn't won at Anfield in 57 years.

Chelsea ended Liverpool's 12-match unbeaten run with a 2-1 triumph thanks to goals by former Wimbledon stars Vinny Jones and Dennis Wise.

What a sickener for Kop boss Graeme Souness who was named Barclays Manager of the Month before the match.

Palace misfit Marce Gabbiadini celebrated his £2.4m cut-price move to Derby by grabbing the winner at Portsmouth.

Ossie Ardiles' job as boss of Newcastle is hanging by a thread after a 9-2 hammering at Second Division bottom club Oxford.

Brian Clough also took a 5-2 thrashing as Forest crashed at home to Sheffield United after he dropped £2m striker Teddy Sheringham.